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VIEW WEEKLY

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WESTWARD HO

JULIEN ARNOLD MARKS A DEBUT AND A COMEBACK WITH THE LONESOME WEST
[PAUL BLINOV / 26]

FRONT: WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE LEFT? / 7

FILM: FUNNY GAMES / 33

MUSIC: ACE FREHLEY / 39

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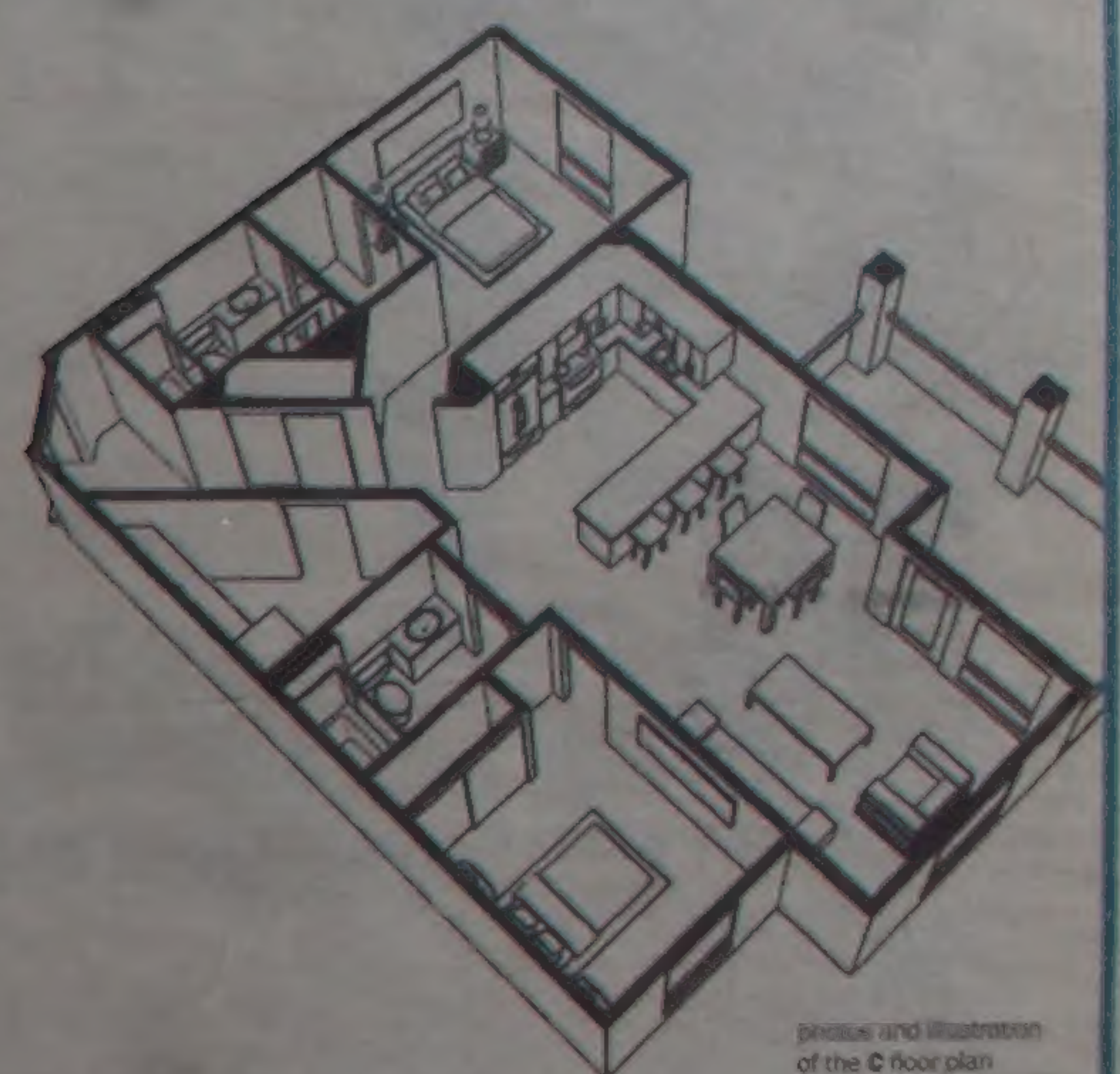
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ON THE COVER



THE LONESOME WEST / 26

"Especially with Martin McDonagh's script, it would be easy to go over the top with this comedy. If you pitch a comedy too high, it could fall flat. If you pitch it too low, make it too realistic, then it can fall flat too. You're mining: you want to get to that seam of comedy gold." —Director Julien Arnold on the challenges of Martin McDonagh's black comedy

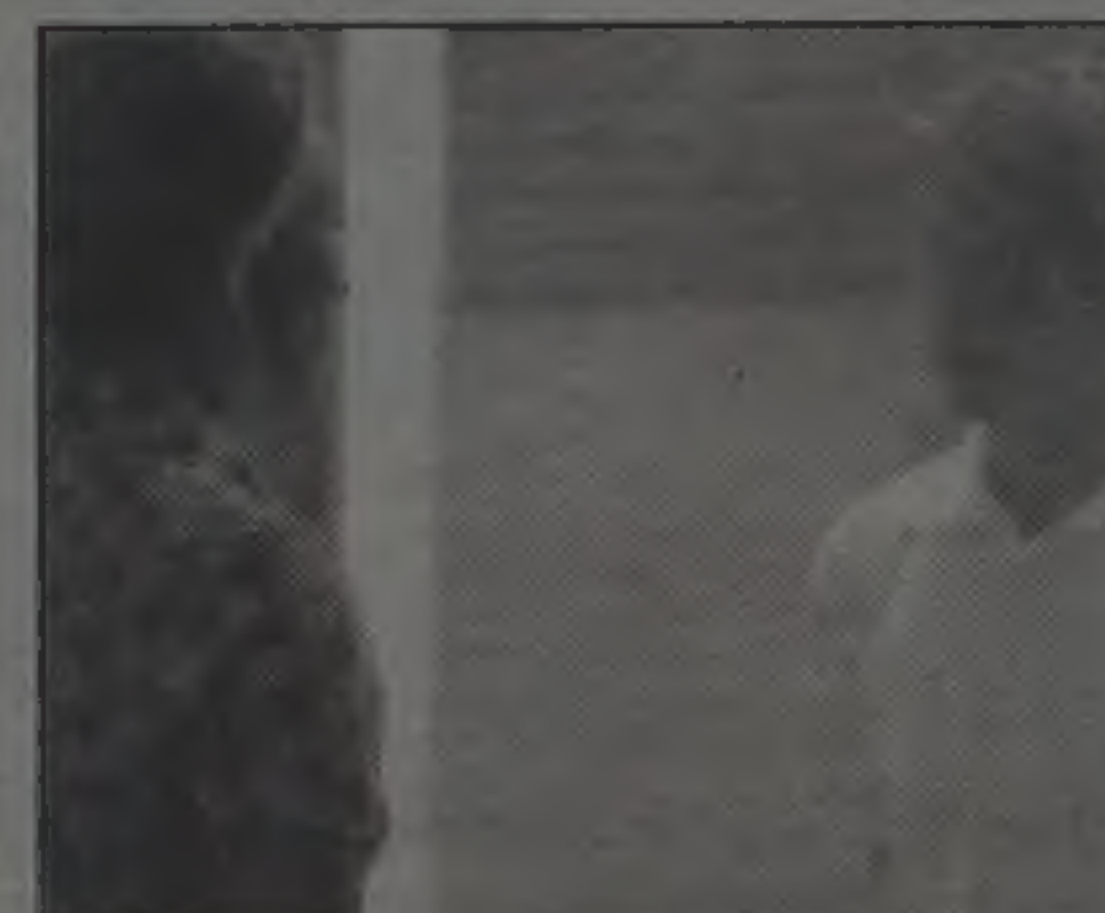
FRONT



WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE LEFT? / 7

"And the 'no plan' message just simply didn't work at all! Because there is a plan! That plan is to privatize, compromise the public interest and pave the way for unrestrained resource development. They have a plan, and it's not pretty." —David Eggen, former NDP MLA, on Albertans for Change ad campaign.

FILM



FUNNY GAMES / 33

"There are simply no real rules to *Funny Games*, a fact which no doubt upsets our bourgeois notions of cathartic drama, but nonetheless does little to implicate us any further in what's unfolding, because to implicate us we'd need to care a lot more." —Josef Braun, critic, on Michael Haneke's remake of his own film

MUSIC



ACE FREHLEY / 39

"It was a big relief the first time and it was a big relief the second time. Gene knows how to push my buttons, so maybe it's not the healthiest situation for me." —Ace Frehley, musician, on breaking up with his old band, Kiss.

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Elections Alberta fell short

SHANNON PHILLIPS / shannon@vueweekly.com

Elections Alberta is supposed to be an impartial agency dedicated to preserving the sanctity of the ballot, but its handling of the recently completed 2008 contest was questionable at best.

It is up to the Chief Electoral Officer to order an enumeration—meaning they hire all manner of retirees and students to go door to door collecting information for the voters' list. He chose not to do this—meaning the voters' list dated from 2004.

Election Alberta's excuse is that they couldn't find the staff to do enumeration, and that people aren't willing to open their doors anymore. Both of these excuses are paper-thin: Statistics Canada enumerates for the population census—even my municipal government sent out enumerators last summer. And ask any politician and they'll tell you that people do open their doors. As for recruiting staff, the solution is simple: pay more, and allow more time.

An incomplete voters' list meant that there was a very good chance the 280 000 new Albertans who moved here since 2005 didn't get their voting information in the mail, because they weren't on the list.

There are at least 3000 homeless people in Edmonton, but their right to vote was severely curtailed, at least for those in the Boyle MacAuley area. In the past, agencies such as the Bissell Centre and the Mustard Seed Church hosted mobile polls, and people without homes could use those centres as their fixed address. People who lived in shelters could cast their ballot right where they were at, rather than having to go to a polling station, something many low-income people find intimidating. That option wasn't available this year.

There were no polling stations on the Blood or Piikani reserves in southwestern Alberta, leaving about 3000 voters to drive over a half-hour to the nearest town. Elections Alberta's excuse was that no one at the band councils returned calls. That's interesting, because Elections Canada has an entire division devoted to Aboriginal voters. They maintain frequent contact with aboriginal representatives and had polling stations on some 600 reserves, settlements and remote Inuit communities in the last federal election.

Elections Alberta had plenty of time to prepare; everyone knew Ed Stelmach needed a mandate. They had time to enumerate; they didn't. They had a ready-made model for Aboriginal inclusion; they ignored it. They had clear precedents for making sure the homeless could vote; they didn't do any of it.

The Chief Electoral Officer's name is Lorne Gibson. His phone number is 427.7191. ▼



MAIL LETTERS

ANOTHER SATISFIED ALBERTA VOTER

I'm trying to make sense of what happened in the election, and the only conclusion I can make is that democracy is dead in Alberta and what we have chosen in its place is a consensual tyranny. How can anyone suggest otherwise when a paltry 22 per cent of eligible voters put our current government in 72 of 83 legislature seats?

Which brings to mind a recent Vuepoint ("Forget charisma, we need vision," Feb 28 - Mar 5, 2008) put forth by the associate music editor of your magazine: "... a lot of people who do [care about politics]—like me—couldn't be bothered to care about this yawn-inducing example of the shortcomings of Alberta's politicians." Oh, pardon me, I didn't realize I had accidentally wandered onto the set of *Survivor*. I thought this was reality we were discussing and not reality entertainment. I think that had our politicians not been so busy trying to put together platforms that would address people's concerns, and make it palatable to a public almost comically skeptical of anything red-tinged, they may have found time to dance and sing and

otherwise entertain you. Besides, I thought entertainment was generally the media's territory.

I would really like to know when it became the responsibility of politicians to make people care about the issues, anyway. Because it used to be the duty of every one of us to care all on our own about who would be making the decisions on our behalf, that would affect every issue in our lives and the lives of the people around us. If Ed Stelmach doesn't care that your Grandmother is sitting in her own shit in an underfunded and under-staffed nursing home, the fact that you didn't make him pack his bags means you don't care either!

This isn't a case where you can wash your hands because you chose to stay home and watch TV. Not voting is a vote all in itself, and the fact is as hard as a Conservative's heart: in this election, if you didn't vote against the PCs, you voted for them. But whatever. Too late now. I guess the best we can hope for is that when the Visigoths come and we're too drunk to fight and too fat to run, maybe they'll be easier on us than we were on them.

RACHEL FRASER

AFRICENTRIC SCHOOLS OFFER CHOICE

Regarding the issue of Africentric schools ("Fear of a Black-planned ed," Feb 28 - Mar 5, 2008), I'd like to comment on something I haven't heard yet

during the debate: the fact that no matter how much the issue is discussed, the final decision has to be made by the parents and the students. It seems that everybody has something to say about this idea, and using the word segregation ignites very strong feelings on both sides. But how about just offering the possibility of a different kind of education system, and letting the individuals make the decision for themselves?

In his article, Minister Faust lists all the different kind of schools that are out there just in Edmonton, and I did appreciate this variety when it came to choosing a school for my children. They went to Hungarian school, they went to the Cogito program, offered by the Edmonton Public School Board, and my daughter decided to go to the Nellie McClung All Girls Junior High Program—because that was something that worked for her. Choosing a school is not a life sentence, it can be changed if it wasn't the right decision. Please give more credit to the individuals!

MUNIKA DIALI

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T: 780.426.1986 / F: 780.426.2889 / E: office@vueweekly.com / W: www.vueweekly.com

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: BOB GARTH / bob@vueweekly.com

NEWS EDITOR: SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

ARTS / FILM EDITOR: DAVID HARRY / david@vueweekly.com

MUSIC EDITOR: EDEN MORRO / eden@vueweekly.com

LISH EDITOR: DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

EDITORIAL ADVENTURE EDITOR: JEREMY DERSEN / jerry@vueweekly.com

ASSOCIATE MUSIC EDITOR: BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER: LYLE BELL / lyle@vueweekly.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: MICHAEL SEK / mika@vueweekly.com

LAYOUT / DESIGN: CHRIS BOSCHMAN / boschman@vueweekly.com

LISTINGS: GLENYS SWITZER / glenys@vueweekly.com

LOCAL ADVERTISING: 426.1986 / advertising@vueweekly.com

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SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER: ROB LIGHTFOOT / rob@vueweekly.com

ADMINISTRATION / DISTRIBUTION: MIKE GARTH / michael@vueweekly.com

ADMINISTRATION / PROMOTIONS: AARON GETZ / aaron@vueweekly.com

MEDIA ASSISTANT: TREVOR KJORLIEN / trevor@vueweekly.com

COVER ILLUSTRATION: MERYL SMITH LAWTON / Epic Photography

CONTRIBUTORS: Ricardo Acuña, Theresa Agnew, Bobbi Barbarich, Paul Blinov, Josef Braun, Rob Brezsky, Dave Buchanan, Jonathan Busch, Sheryle Carlson, Andrew Clarkson, David McCleno, Wynne Dyer, Laura England, Tamara Gonzalez, James Gravel, Sen Handley, Jan Hostyn, Whitney Houston, Connie Howard, Lewis Kelly, James Lyle, Omar Moudalem, Andrea Nemerson, Carolyn Nikodym, Alyssa Noel, Stephen Notley, Mary Christa O'Keefe, Roland Pemberton, Shannon Phillips, TB Player, Steven Sandoz, Jay Smith, Darren Zenko

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After a dismal election, what's next for the NDP and the left?

SHANNON PHILLIPS / shannon@vancouverweekly.com

The polls were barely closed on Mar 3, and the hand-wringing over the future of Alberta's electoral left had already begun; pundits openly called for the resignation of Alberta New Democratic Party leader Brian Mason's and the blogosphere bubbled over with half-formed opinions on uniting the defeated Liberals, NDP and Greens into one left-of-centre party that could compete with the Tories.

The day after the election, Albertans for Change, a campaign financed by Alberta unions, dismantled its website and removed all traces of the more than a million dollars it was estimated to have spent on anti-Conservative advertising.

The NDP lost two of its four seats on election day, and though their defeat was nowhere near as devastating as the routing the Liberals suffered in Edmonton, many progressive Albertans were left wondering: what did the NDP do wrong during the campaign? And how do they fix it?

IT'S NOT as if the NDP hasn't been here before—they lost all of their seats in 1993, and have maintained only two seats in the Legislature for eight of the last 11 years.

Their percentage of the vote hasn't changed, either—since 1993, they've enjoyed between eight per cent and 11 per cent popular support in the province. In 2004, when the party had a small "breakthrough" and won four seats in Edmonton, they still received a mere 10 per cent of the province-wide popular vote. When taken in context, 2004 was the anomaly, not 2008.

Throughout the campaign, opinion polls showed remarkable Conservative strength. That support was not just resilient under the pressure of the largest NDP campaign the party had run since 1993; in fact, Conservative support in Edmonton actually grew over the 28-day campaign.

University of Calgary political scientist Lisa Lambert, who studies the electoral system, says that the NDP focussed too much energy on attacking the Liberals, and thereby missed the strength of the Conservatives in their incumbent seats.

"[Progressives] were just talking to each other. Not to Albertans. And that's why they had no idea what was going on with most voters. They just convinced themselves that most people think like we do."

The NDP, explains Lambert, is a movement party—its history is markedly different from the Conservatives and Liberals. Conservative and Liberal parties are "cadre" parties—they broker together a set of interests for the purposes of winning and retaining power. In contrast, the NDP has its roots and its reason for being in social movements outside of legislatures and parliaments.

Lambert argues that the NDP's relationship to environmentalists, the women's movement, trade unions and other oppositional groups ebbs and flows.

SIERRA CLUB OF CANADA Prairie Chapter director Lindsay Telfer says her



NEWS ELECTION

group had a good relationship with former MLA David Eggen, but not with the NDP leadership.

"Brian Mason has never met with us or done any significant outreach to us. The Sierra Club has never been contacted by Rachel Notley or her people, either," says Telfer. "We now have a better relationship with the Liberals than we do the NDP, and that is really sad, seeing as the NDP is the party that is supposed to be connected to social movements."

One long-time NDP member—who spoke on the condition of anonymity—says that the relationship Eggen built with environmental groups was "shattered" when leader Brian Mason reversed—then softened—his party's historical position calling for hard caps on CO₂ emissions.

"The trust was broken. There has to be accountability in the party—our position during an election campaign has to be the same as the grassroots enacts at conventions, and the same as what we say between elections."

"Brian Mason could have said during the debate that the Conservatives and the Liberals don't have a tenable position on climate change, but we do. But we couldn't say that, because Mason weakened our position. It left us with nothing."

Telfer adds that the NDP's "backstep" on climate change let Ed Stelmach off the hook on the environment. "The Liberals and NDP were busy criticizing each other, and it had the effect of leaving Stelmach unfazed."

Former NDP MLA David Eggen, who lost his Edmonton-Calder seat on Mar 3, was the party's environment critic. He says the central campaign didn't "lay it on the line clearly

enough" on climate change.

"There's an awareness building in the environmental movement that you can't have environmental sustainability without equality and social justice. That means the NDP needs to be active on the environment, and give these people a political home," Eggen argues. "The environment is an issue that brings young people into activism. By downplaying it you are doing a disservice to the next generation who will help to move and shake the future of this province. It is a big reason why I am not just going to fade away. I saw so many young people become active right before my very eyes. I won't let that end."

THE NDP is historically considered the party of labour, but those relations are strained these days.

One labour activist, who also insisted on remaining anonymous, characterized the relationship between the NDP and the Alberta Federation of Labour—the central labour body in the province, which claims 27 unions and 137 000 rank-and-file members—as "the lowest they've ever been," and "fraught with miscommunication and mistrust—they seem to have a wedge driven between them."

In the days after the election, NDP leader Brian Mason told the *Edmonton Journal* that the money spent on the Albertans for Change campaign—even a fraction of it—could have gone to shoring up support for Eggen and Ray Martin, the other sitting NDP MLA who went down to defeat.

AFL President Gil McGowan says blaming the Albertans for Change campaign for the loss of two NDP seats is "ridiculous."

"The fact is that most of the money spent on that campaign wouldn't have been spent at all if it had gone to a political party."

NDP campaign director Lou Arab says the party benefited from generous support from individual unions, but the multi-million dollar Albertans for Change campaign—sponsored by the Alberta Federation of Labour and the Alberta Building Trades Council and also funded to the tune of \$300 000 by the Alberta Union of Public Employees—was "not helpful."

"We were not consulted on the themes or content of the campaign," says Arab.

Many labour activists were left scratching their heads over the content of the Albertans for Change ads. "They were negative attack ads, and those don't work in Alberta," said one labour activist, who also requested anonymity.

"They used the same ad firm—with strong ties to the Ontario Liberals—as the building trades unions used against the Conservatives in Ontario. And guess what? Politics are different in Alberta," adds the union source. "Many union members are going to be asking some very serious questions about how their money was spent on this campaign."

Former MLA Eggen says that the personal attacks on Stelmach "made it easier for the Conservatives to get out their vote. The 'time for a change' theme was too vague ... this is not like changing your socks. Campaigns should target specific issues that matter to people."

"And the 'no plan' message," Eggen continues, "just simply didn't work at all! Because there is a plan! That plan is to privatize, compromise the public interest and pave the way for unrestrained resource development. They have a plan, and it's not pretty."

NDP spokesperson Lou Arab says that regardless of the content, labour's current strategy of funding parallel campaigns during elections doesn't activate union members and doesn't move votes.

"Third-party campaigns don't really

work," Arab says bluntly. "If labour wants to get people elected, what works is releasing people [to work on campaigns] and financial resources. My view is these campaigns where unions spend money advertising on select issues don't lead to the kind of change labour unions say they want."

McGowan, who did communications for the 1997 and 2001 NDP campaigns, counters that the Federation "had to try something new this election. [Labour unions] can't just tell their members to vote NDP. We've tried that, and it doesn't work."

But Arab disputes McGowan's characterization of past labour efforts. "I don't think Gil McGowan has ever told his members to vote NDP," he says.

THE LONG-RUNNING CHATTER about "uniting the left"—either under the banner of one new party or by trading off some seats, where the Liberals agree not to run a candidate in ridings where the NDP is strong and vice versa to eliminate vote-splitting that allows a Tory to come up the middle—had dissipated when the Liberals appeared to be a contender for power, but it's come back with a vengeance in the blogosphere, opinion pages and in coffee shops across Alberta.

Even McGowan, a long-time New Democrat, believes "all options should be on the table ... including a new centre-left party, name changes and cooperation between the parties."

But Eggen says the "unite the left" trial balloons typically come from the Liberals, not the NDP.

"It always comes up from self-proclaimed progressives on the Liberal side. And it reflects a fundamental misunderstanding about what a political party is for. It isn't just for power—you join these entities because they have a coherent set of principles that you think should govern the province."

Eggen, for his part, isn't blaming the Liberals or even the Greens for his defeat in Calder. "I do not engage in these sour-grapes notions. People who lost, they lost for a number of reasons."

The U of C's Lisa Lambert says that even if all of the anti-Conservative votes—from all parties on the right and left—were tallied up for one party instead of spread across the four main opposition contenders, only 23 more opposition seats would have emerged from the contest, leaving the Conservative majority unscathed. In other words, the problem isn't a split on the left, it's the Tory juggernaut.

MOST PEOPLE believe that rebuilding the NDP is going to require a more concerted effort to engage the grassroots. David Eggen argues the party hasn't been aggressive enough in reaching out to its "natural constituents ... working people, wage earners, people who are losing their spending power."

One NDP member who also spoke anonymously says the leadership is "cut off" from its membership and that Mason does not understand how to do politics with "real people"—preferring instead to stay under the Leg-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10



FOIPP request reveals missing childcare millions says group

ALYSSA NOEL / alyssa@vnewweekly.com

At Garneau University Childcare Centre hopeful parents have to wait to get on a waiting list. The daycare quit taking names after more than 150 people submitted applications for 10 available spots.

As an example of the province's woeful childcare system, the centre provided an appropriate backdrop for Public Interest Alberta's press conference last week. It was there the advocacy group revealed that a freedom of information request led to the discovery that the provincial government has not accounted for \$14.9 million that the federal government handed out in the 2005-2006 fiscal year to boost childcare in Alberta.

"We were expecting our child care task force for the province would go, 'Well that's great. Thank you very much. We'll roll out a strategy to create more child care spaces that are desperately needed.' But nothing happened," says the group's executive director, Bill Moore-Kilgannon.

In 2005 - 2006, documents show the federal government gave the province \$93.2 million, but they only spent \$78.3 million. For the next fiscal year, the overall budget for childcare was supposed to be \$147 million, but only \$103.7 million was spent, leaving over \$43 million unaccounted for.

"The whole problem is when the Harper government came up with this they didn't put any strings on it," Moore-Kilgannon says. "There's no accountability."

THE REASON the money is hard to trace is

NEWS | CHILDCARE

because all federal transfer payments go into a general revenue fund for the provincial government to allocate based on "the needs of Albertans [in order] to come up with a made-in-Alberta plan," says Cathy Ducharme, a communications representative with Child Services Alberta.

"Federal funding is not always consistent," she says. "We need to make sure it's sustainable."

She points to the province's five point investment plan for child care which, she argues, topped up wages for childcare workers, implemented an incentive program to attract new workers and allocated money for current staff to go back to school for further education. "It's been getting better already. We've made up 2000 new spaces," she adds.

But Moore-Kilgannon scoffs at that response. "The province will say, 'We have this five point plan,' but it's not resolving the crisis. They're getting a few more places, but not matching [the need] out there."

And, he adds, it doesn't explain why nearly 80 pages in the 100 page document his group obtained with the FOIPP request are censored.

"Premier Stelmach has consistently been saying he's for more openness and transparency in government," he says. "Getting 80 pages of 100 pages in blanked out material is not transparency. These are not secrets about the war in Afghanistan. This is about childcare." ▽

Israel and Palestine: a tragic lack of news

COMMENT

DYER STRAIGHT

GWYNNE DYER
gwynne@vnewweekly.com

"Twenty-four hours a day of rolling news to fill," lamented the senior producer of an all-news radio station recently, "and only two hours of actual news to fill it." But his problem is minor compared to that of people condemned to cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where there is now almost nothing new to report at all.

There is plenty of incident, of course. More than 200 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip against nearby Israeli towns in one week recently. Some were a new, longer-range version that reached Ashkelon, a large town that had never been hit before. One Israeli died, and several were injured.

Israel retaliated with massive raids on the northern Gaza Strip by land and air. Two Israeli soldiers were killed, and about 120 Palestinians. Israel says 90 per cent of the Palestinian casualties were fighters; Palestinian sources say half were civilians, including 22 children. Given the crowded living conditions of the Gaza Strip, the latter estimate is more plausible, although it would make no sense for Israeli forces to target civilians deliberately.

Then, on Mar 6, a Palestinian walked into Merkaz Harav religious school in Jerusalem and killed eight young Israelis before being shot down himself. All of these events were extensively covered in the rolling news, but in what sense was there anything new about them?

It was also the same old stories on the diplomatic level. Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, whose influence only extends to those parts of the West Bank not directly controlled by Israeli soldiers or settlers, declared that he would not take part in further "peace talks" with the Israelis until they agreed to a cease-fire that included the Gaza Strip.

The shaky coalition that governs Israel was undismayed by this, since any concessions to Palestinians in the peace talks, should they occur, would ignite internal quarrels that would bring down Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government. But US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in the region as part of her untiring quest to create a legacy for the Bush administration, insisted that both Olmert and Abbas show a willingness to talk.

So Olmert said that the Merkaz Harav killings would not make him break off talks with Abbas, and the latter said that he would resume talks—until Rice left town, after which he reverted to saying that there could be none until there was a cease-fire in Gaza. But Abbas has no control over Gaza. Hamas, which does, said nothing but smiled quietly.

THIS IS ALL SO FAMILIAR that the media would not report it in any detail if there were some-

thing more exciting to hold the ads apart. Apart from the fact that the Palestinians are now split between a Fatah government in the West Bank and a Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip, it could be a week of stories from the first intifada in the early 1990s, or from the second intifada at the beginning of this decade.

The Palestinian-Israeli quarrel has re-entered one of those lengthy phases when neither side can agree on what terms it would be willing to offer the other for a peace settlement. In Israel, the split is embodied in the government itself, with various coalition parties drawing "red lines" about which concession or gesture would cause them to quit. Among the Palestinians, it is now incarnated in a formal division of territory between Fatah and Hamas.

From Washington, it is possible to conjure up some flimsy optimism about the situation—"Ten months is a long time. There's plenty of time to get a deal done," said President Bush last week—but no deal is going to happen while Bush is still in office. Whether it might happen under another administration is another question, but not one that is likely to have a happier answer.

Imagine that at this time next year President Obama, or President McCain, or President Clinton decides to spend some political capital in the Middle East. Could it achieve anything?

Unless there has been some a political earthquake in the meantime, there will still be two rival Palestinian governments, one of which is formally committed to waging relentless war against Israel (even if the reality is a little more negotiable). Israelis will have every right to claim that there is nobody to negotiate with.

The two Palestinian authorities will still be struggling to gain the upper hand in the internecine power struggle, which means that neither party can afford to make significant concessions to the Israelis. So nothing can happen until Fatah re-establishes control over the Gaza Strip (unlikely), or until Hamas dominates a reunified Palestinian authority that includes the West Bank.

Even if that happened, Hamas would still have to decide that it really wants to negotiate with Israel, and the Israelis would then have to decide that they were willing to talk to Hamas. Not only that, but to offer Hamas serious territorial concessions in return for a cease-fire or peace treaty.

None of that is at all likely. There will be no substantive peace talks this year, and there will be none next year either. It's all just diplomatic posturing punctuated by killing. Both sides hate the phrase "cycle of violence," because it implies that both sides are responsible for it. But it is the correct phrase, and "cycles" aren't news. ▽

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in *Vue Weekly*.



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The real story behind pathetic voter turnout

RICARDO ACUÑA / ualberta.ca/parkland

As pundits, the media and the opposition look for a million ways to analyze the recent provincial election, one angle has yet to be covered. The mantra of the neo-liberal ideologues since their rise in the 1980s has been simple: government bad, market good.

When these folks came to power in Alberta under the leadership of Ralph Klein, they moved quickly and efficiently to minimize the size, power and relevance of government, and hand unmitigated power over to the free market.

We saw a similar message with the growth of the now-defunct Reform Party in the '90s—a party that was, of all things, running for parliament by spreading disdain for politics and politicians. Somehow Preston Manning and his gang were able to build an entire political party, and eventually rise to power (albeit under a different leader), by espousing the position that politicians and government were bad, and that people were better off without them.

The theory behind this message is that governments, and by extension politicians, are inefficient, greedy and corrupt: that they exist only to take away your hard-earned dollars through high taxes and spend them on projects and programs that will not benefit you in any way.

The rise of this get-rid-of-government message was made possible by extreme amounts of funding given by North American corporations to think-tanks like the Fraser Institute, which worked incredibly hard during the '80s and '90s to convince Canadians that government was bad and that all we needed was an unfettered marketplace to help us move forward. It was a clear and direct mission—convert every last Canadian, especially the media and politicians, to this new-found market fundamentalism.

Why would industry spend \$40 billion over 20 years for the sake of a political message? Because they clued in that if they could lead people to lose all faith in government and politicians and adopt the mantra of small government then there would be no one willing or able to place restrictions or limits on corporations, and they would no longer have to pay taxes.

The election of Ronald Reagan was their first North American success, quickly followed by others like Ralph Klein, Mike Harris, Gordon Campbell, Paul Martin and now Stephen Harper—every one of them a born-again convert to small government and free markets.

Much of the discussion around Alberta's latest provincial election has revolved around the abysmally low voter turnout. Some have suggested that the party leaders failed to capture people's imaginations or that they somehow failed to bring the relevant issues forward. Others have attributed to lack of charisma by opposition leaders or to outright apathy on the part of voters. Still others have attributed it to some Alberta voters taking some sort of moral high ground and not voting as a statement that none of the parties or their platforms were good enough.

Although some of the reasons above were no doubt true for some of the folks in the province who did not vote, it is unlikely that the majority gave it anywhere near that much thought.

THE REALITY IS QUITE SIMPLE: after 20 years of repeatedly being told by leaders, the media, academics and pundits that government is bad, corrupt, ineffective and irrelevant, why would anyone bother to show up for the sake of casting a ballot?

It does not matter who the leaders are, or what their platforms say. It does not even matter who wins



Cheation (Creative Commons)

or loses. The far right has succeeded in convincing a majority of Albertans that government is irrelevant and of no consequence to their lives. The only identities that matter to them are that of consumer and of being a cog in the machinery of the marketplace.

As such, the solutions for Alberta's electoral woes are not to be found in tweaking party platforms, or in finding appealing charismatic leaders, or even in forcing people to vote.

If we want to save electoral politics in this province, then we must begin by counteracting 20 years of negative messaging about the government. We must reclaim government as an expression of the public interest, and once again understand that public service, taxes and public goods are how we come together as a society for the betterment of that society.

In essence, the right has taken from us the public space that was active democratic citizenship. If we want to reclaim it, we need to start by building reconnections between Albertans and their government. Our schools, community groups and media outlets need to stop building cynicism and disdain towards government, and instead begin to show that government is not only relevant in our lives, but that we are responsible for what that government looks like.

Implicit in that is the reestablishment of the notion of public service, in the form of elected office, as something noble and to be valued—these are people that give up their free time, their privacy, their family lives and often their careers for the sake of serving the common good.

Ultimately, the best solutions are the ones that address the heart of the problem. In this case, what is required is for politics on the highest level—the level of ideas and ideology. Unabashed free market neoliberalism has led to the destruction of virtually all our public spaces, government and politics included. Those are the ideas we need to challenge head-on if we want to reclaim those spaces and begin building positive change in Alberta again. ▽

Ricardo Acuña is Executive Director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta.



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islature dome.

There have been grumblings about Brian Mason's leadership, even coming from Mason himself. The day after the election he told the *Edmonton Journal* that he was ready to retire if someone else wanted to replace him. He pointed out that leading the Alberta NDP is not a job that anyone really covets, saying,

"It's often the person who draws the short straw that has to be the leader."

Mason's comments left some NDP members wondering whether he even really wants the job. The party elects its leader at every convention, the next of which is slated for June.

For this article, many people would not speak "on the record"—most are afraid of doing harm to a fragile party and a labour movement with little provincial clout. Five people approached for this article declined to speak about

the future of the NDP in any way. Others insisted upon total anonymity, saying they didn't want to upset colleagues or friends, harm their own chances of advancement within the party or the labour movement or further weaken the NDP. Such self-enforced silence means less healthy democratic debate about the future of the electoral left—perhaps just the thing the NDP needs. ▽

Shannon Phillips worked for the Alberta NDP from 2003 - 2006.

A few more words about statins risks

HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

CONNIE HOWARD
health@vuwweekly.com

I know I just talked about this, but there's more dying to be said.

John Carey, in the Jan 17 *Business Week* cover story, reports that a large, government-funded clinical trial on cholesterol-lowering medications showed no statistically significant reduction in mortality risk at all.

There's more. Experts like Dr Rodney A Hayward, professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan, are now saying that current evidence supports ignoring LDL cholesterol completely when assessing heart disease risk.

Even Pfizer's own numbers (with the help of a little math by John Carey) tell us that for 99 out of 100 people taking Lipitor there is no measurable benefit—and that's based on an industry-sponsored trial, one which used carefully selected patients with multiple risk factors, which likely explains the findings of the government study showing no significant benefit at all.

Though this is huge—and hugely upsetting—to some, it isn't really new; it's just now making mainstream news more often. Plenty of research over the years has, believe it or not, drawn similar conclusions: statins offer no benefit in anyone over the age of 65 no matter how much their cholesterol goes down; lower total cholesterol actually becomes a health risk after the age of 50; statins show no-benefit in women of any age who haven't already had a heart attack, and only "somewhat" of a benefit in those who have (one which, given the package of risks statins come with, would be a questionable one at best).

Yet for years we've been handed statins like they're a god-send. Isn't the industry misleading the public and the health professionals looking after us by fudging the truth unethical and immoral?

Those of us that have dared suggest there is more to heart disease than high cholesterol, or that the risks of statins outweigh any possible benefits, have often swallowed accusations of being alarmist, flakey or irresponsible by those who still hold that conventional medical advice is the only kind based on trustworthy science.

To these people I say objectivity in science is a bit of a myth—far too

much done in the name of science is actually skewed in favour of profits. And when information trickles out either too obtuse for most of us to make sense of, or too little and too late, the trustworthiness of the entire industry behind modern medicine must be called into question. It is, after all, our health we're paying with.

AND TO THOSE always eager to inform me that the difference between medical bunk and real medicine is that "real" (read Western) medical treatments have been confirmed to work by scientific testing and retesting I say, "Excuse me?"

I'm not opposed to western medicine; it sometimes preserves our lives and our sanity. What I'm opposed to is obfuscation by those interested in selling their product, and health reporters being either too busy to investigate or being silenced by corporatism. What I'm opposed to is putting medical orthodoxy on a pedestal that doesn't permit questioning, and doctors getting their information on medications from the makers of those medications. Because not only does western medicine save lives, it also all too often ruins them.

But despite all the obfuscation and silencing going on, many of us have long known that statins are not the answer to what ails our hearts. The picture is almost always bigger than any single factor. Looking at the whole—taking into account things like entire populations with low rates of heart disease whatever their cholesterol or dietary fat—would've put us on an entirely different research path.

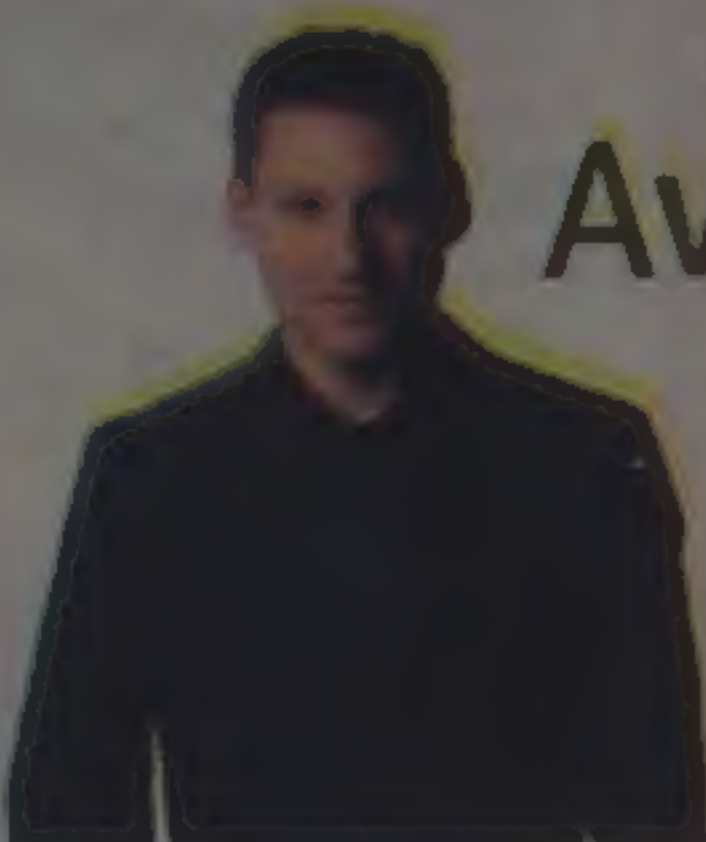
Where statins do help, they help not so much because they successfully lower cholesterol levels, but very likely because they also reduce inflammation, which is a somewhat different problem, and one that so-called unproven alternative approaches specialize in.

The sad victory of those bent on convincing us that alternative ways of achieving heart health are ineffective is that too many of our mothers and fathers now have, thanks to the supposedly life-saving statins, experienced Alzheimer-like memory losses, muscle losses significant enough to make walking past the mailbox a chore, and feeling young and amorous a very dim memory.

Yet, almost unbelievably, some are still calling for wider use of statins. ▽

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Locally produced doc aims to add to discourse on tar sands

LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vancouverweekly.com

"There isn't a proper dialogue about [the tar sands]," says Niobe Thompson, researcher and producer for *Tar Sands: The Selling of Alberta*, a locally produced, CBC-funded documentary on the local and geopolitical consequences of the energy boom in Alberta.

"So few Albertans have any sense of the engine that's driving our economy now—what it actually looks like, what it's like to work up there," he explains. "Some of our film is devoted to the families that are involved in that world. If that's the one thing that we do with this film, I'm happy."

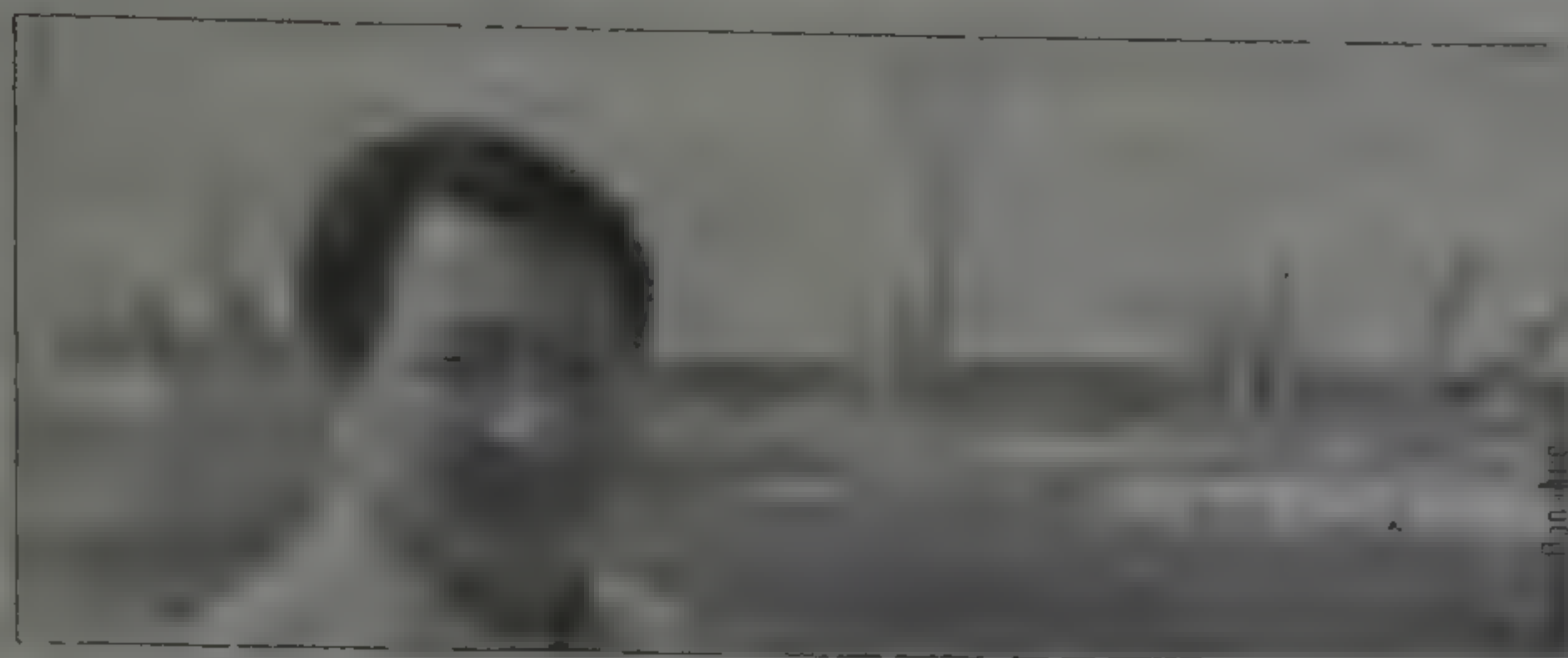
Tar Sands does much, much more than that, though. Most of all, the documentary provides a sense of context—geopolitical, historical, social, you name it, it's got it.

"If Americans were asked to industrialize a piece of American soil the size of Florida in order to secure their energy future, that would probably be a step too far," says Thompson. "They're very happy to have a neighbour who's prepared to do that for them. America is our single and sole market for this product. All of our unconventional crude goes to American markets."

But there are also more local factors contributing to the orgy of construction and development around Fort McMurray, says Thompson.

"We have a democracy under considerable stress here in Alberta," he explains. "We have a large majority that's just been brought in for whom one in five of the electorate voted for. And there are lots of reasons for that, but I think we have a system which supports the unconstrained development of the oil sands."

This "unconstrained development" should be looked at more closely, says Thompson. "There absolutely is a bet



DOCUMENTARY

THU, MAR 13 (9 PM) & SAT, MAR 15 (10 PM)
TAR SANDS: THE SELLING OF ALBERTA
DIRECTED BY TOM RADFORD
PRODUCED BY PETER RAYMONT
AIRING ON CBC TV

ter way. There are many ways in which it could be done better. There are really difficult questions we should be addressing which we're not addressing to actually safeguard the survival of the oil sands."

ALBERTA JUST HAD a provincial election in which the development of the tar sands was a central issue, so why release *Tar Sands* just after the campaign season instead of before Albertans went to the polls?

"We would have liked for the film to be broadcast the week before the election. This is, in a way, our contribution to the political discourse in the province, and it's a pretty damn important one, I think," explains Thompson. "But the CBC's policy is not to be seen to overtly meddle in provincial affairs. They were never going to show it before the election."

As *Tar Sands* points out the problems surrounding the tar sands and in turn describes the forces surrounding them, viewers might get the impres-

sion that it's a Michael Moore-style polemic dressed up as a documentary. Not so, says Thompson.

"I think we've been very careful with our facts. There's no point in which we're even lying by omission," he says. "I think this is a fairly sober, realistic assessment of what's happening here."

"I expect to be able to talk to everyone who participated in this film after it airs," adds Thompson. "There's this idea that if you want to be able to get in the door with oil companies and make films about what's happening up there you have to be so servile. And that's not what our public broadcaster is paid to do for us."

Tar Sands: The Selling of Alberta premieres on CBC TV on Thu, Mar 13 (9 pm) and Sat, Mar 15 (10 pm). A public screening is also being planned for Edmonton in the spring. ▽

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Gygax triggers Roddenberry triggers Mass Effect triggers Vulcan, AB

GAMES INFINITE LIVES

Dungeons & Dragons creator (legally, and and factually sort of co-creator) Gary Gygax died last week, and I'm pretty much over it. In fact, I backlashed so vigorously against the epic-level nerdgasm of hyperbolic mourning on the internet that I actually knocked my psyche loose from the space-time continuum and sent it tumbling back in 1991 and got all misty-eyed over Gene Roddenberry.

God almighty, I just had a glimpse what the web would have been like if the creator of *Star Trek* had waited a little longer to kick it and had gone to that great dilithium chamber in the sky in the modern internet age. Just ... oh, shit, I need company here; join me, please, and imagine the blog posts, the comments threads ... the zettabytes of

YouTube weeping. Imagine, and thrill.

So, anyway, I found myself in the mood for a decent *Star Trek* game, and since every *Star Trek* game other than the NES version of *Star Trek 25th Anniversary* and the Next Generation *How To Host A Mystery* has sucked like ... um ... a starving Salt Vampire?—I had to settle for *Mass Effect*. The new downloadable *ME* adventure was released this week, and I figured a little derring-do featuring a rogue asteroid and a bunch of multi-eyed alien weirdoes would be just the thing.

It'd been a while since I last checked in with the astro-adventures of Commander Fennel Shepard and her crew of cosmic conversationalists, and she was cute as ever, nasty scar and all. Still lookin' good in her standard-issue sci-fi skintights, still with a ready-for-action swivel in her stride that really accentuates that rack ... of deadly weapons she wears on her back.

It was nice to see her again, though I must say I was tempted as always to start

all over with a new character because I love the face-tweaking process so much. I was only dissuaded by the thought of slack-jawing my way through the first couple hours of the game, of having to once again talk to those three shitty farmers hiding in that space shed.

THAT AIRLOCK *that weird memory of my own, one I'd apparently repressed. I didn't need to play *Mass Effect* just so I could get some approximation of the *Star Trek* experience; I'd entered a "*Star Trek* inspired world" just a couple weeks ago I'd had an "out-of-this-world adventure" — the "ultimate adventure," even — and had almost totally forgotten it. I guess that's just part of the strange magic of the "Vulcan Space Adventure" at the Tourism & Trek Station in the starstruck town of Vulcan, Alberta.*

We just happened to be in Vulcan, running some errands, and I kind of insisted we stop by the Trekkie tourist trap; it'd

been a couple of years since my last visit, and I wanted to see how far they'd come, if there was something inside that wicked-looking flying saucer of a building besides a straightbacked wooden chair surrounded by a half dozen mismatched comic-shop *Trek* standees and a hand-letter sign inviting me to TAKE [MY] PICTURE WITH THE CREW OF THE ENTERPRIZE. Little did I know that, sometime in 2007, the Vulcan Tourism & Trek Station had exchanged actual reality for ... virtual reality.

The first thing you notice about Vulcan Space Adventure, besides the fact it costs 10 bucks a head, is that it is in no way, shape or form an official or even officially-licensed *Star Trek* experience. Trademark terms like "Starfleet" are nowhere to be found; the VR wizards of GestureTek could only approximate the *Trek* universe under the fair-use provisions for parody and satire. So, say hello to "Captain Krok": a sub-dinner-theatre amateur actor, so camera-shy he's literally shaking, doing a bad

imitation of a bad imitation of a bad ... imitation ... of ... William ... Shatner

So what kind of awesome, state-of-the-art virtual reality game experience does a QUARTER-GODDAMNED-MILLION-DOLLARS of Alberta Lottery Fund money buy? I'm going to ask you to imagine along with me again. Imagine everything that the most doubtful, pessimistic, Nintendo-hating naysayer predicted the Wii would be, combine it with the gameplay, taste and production values of a 1992 Sega CD full-motion-video game, and spice the mix with off-brand *Trek* ambience: you watch an embarrassing fan video, then you point at glowing cubes until they're replaced with a picture of an explosion. The really sad thing is, I've actually had worse times in Vulcan.

A month of terror and tragedy in my personal nerdscape; I've found myself actually questioning whether I even want to be a nerd anymore, I'm that fragile. All I can do is hope Stan Lee holds on until I can get myself together. ▀

Double-D returns to the box

HOCKEY IN THE BOX

What can we say? Another week, another three overtime wins. And, oh yeah, Cogliano scored all three overtime winners. Cogs!!! Dave Young is lost somewhere in southern Alberta this week, so *In The Box* alumnus and perennial fantasy football league cellar-dweller David DiCenzo is filling his shoes for the week. Welcome back, Mr DiCenzo

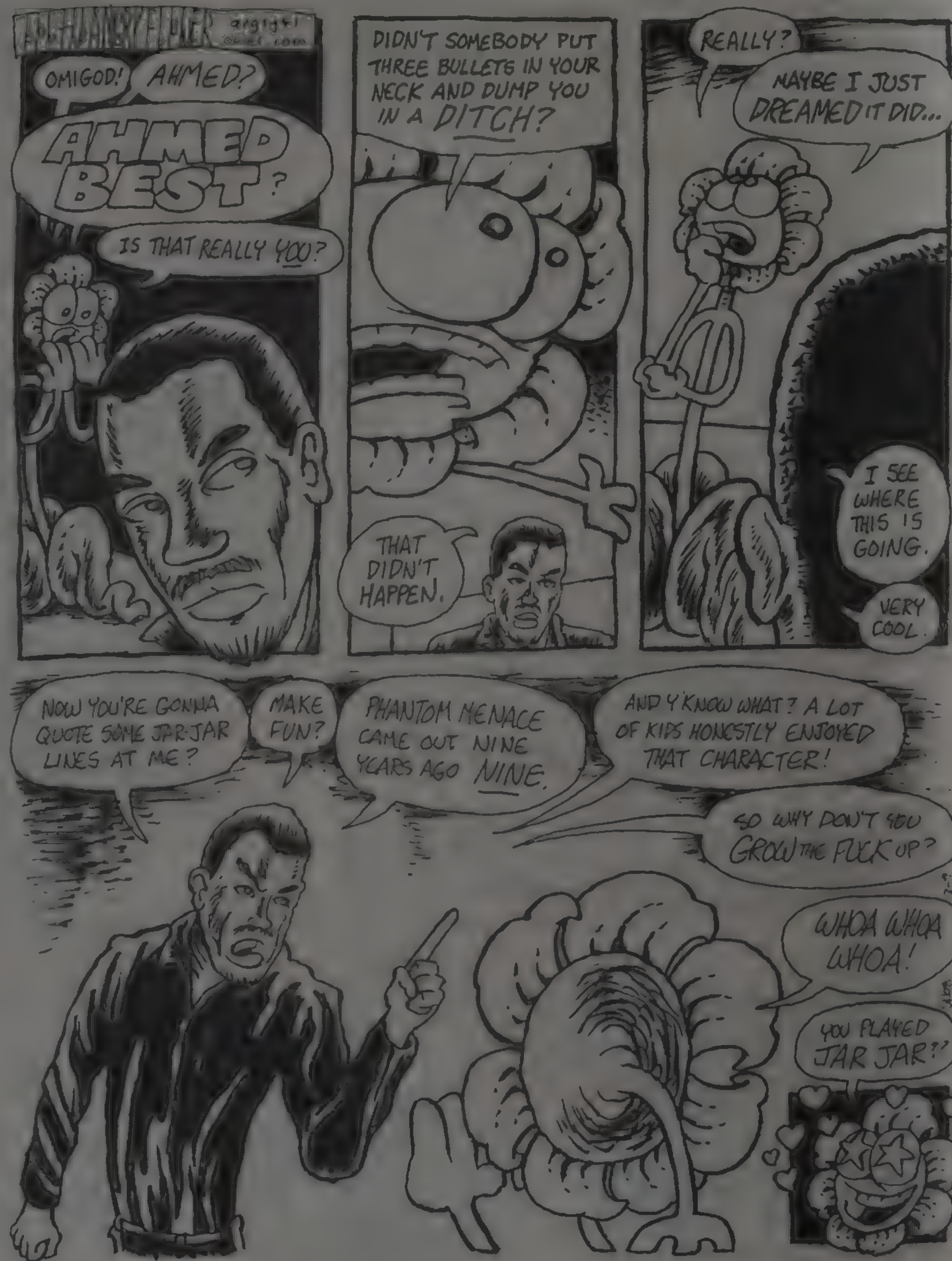
HOME SWEET HOME *When you're home, you're home. I've missed ITB. So, off the hop, I'd say the Oil have been looking pretty good of late. In fact, as an Ohio resident (I really just said that, didn't I?) I actually saw them last Mar 7 in Columbus. The boys all skate well and man are the kids great. They're doing a second half impression of what Toews and Kane did before Christmas. Cogliano's winner showed the potential they have to be explosive ... burst into the zone early in the OT, took a quick pass and then beats one of the better goalies in the NHL this year, Pascal Leclaire, five-hole. I'd say there's plenty to be excited about in Edmonton. 00*

SWEET TURNAROUND *What a difference a year makes. Even with the play-offs a distant blip on the horizon, the Oilers are playing some inspired hockey as of late, especially when compared to last season. Last year, starting at game 63 of the schedule, the Oilers managed to lose nine games in a row, en route to an embarrassing 2-17-1 record over the last 20 games of the season. This time around, they've already eclipsed that performance (in a good way) by winning seven of the eight games they've played since game 63. They already have more points than they finished the season off with last year, and are on pace for 85 points by season's end. If they could, by some crazy miracle, manage to win the last 12 games of the season, they would finish with 97 points, which would most*

certainly be enough to get into the play-offs. But that's not very likely; it's still a case of too little too late. That being said, it's a treat to watch them play the way they have, and maybe a bit of a teaser as to how good this team could be in the future. TB

HOME SWEET HOME (PT 2) I'll tell you, one thing I miss about Canada is decent hockey coverage. I obviously had to get Center, er, Centre Ice (a godsend, for the most part) and on occasion, I see the *NHL SportsCenter* *NHL* but not enough, man. The regional coverage in the States with crazy colour guys like Denis Potvin flashing his Cups rings is weird. And ever try watch a game on Versus? Best thing about Versus was in the All-Star Game and they caught a miked Rick DiPietro say, "I'm done. I just f@#ked my hip again." Awesome. Anyways, even the nationally-televised *NHL* game on *NBC* was *NHL* at times. I cherish every Canadian broadcast I see. Consider yourselves *NHL*

WHAT'S THE POINT? *As an NHL fan, just isn't as great a thing as it should be, at least, statistically speaking. Teams can convincingly beat their opposition, but still have less talented teams winning at their home or on the road due to the awarding of extra points for overtime/shootout losses. In fact, due to the ample amount of extra points that have been meted out this year, only three teams in the league are currently below .500. An idea that has been floated around is that the NHL just come out and grant three points for a regulation win and split the three points in tie games just as they have been. Teams that can put other teams away in 60 minutes would be rewarded, while teams that need extra time to do so wouldn't benefit as much. I like the idea, but doubt it will come about, as this would lead to less exciting playoff races come March and April. And of course, this change wouldn't benefit the Oilers unless they started winning more games outright. TB*



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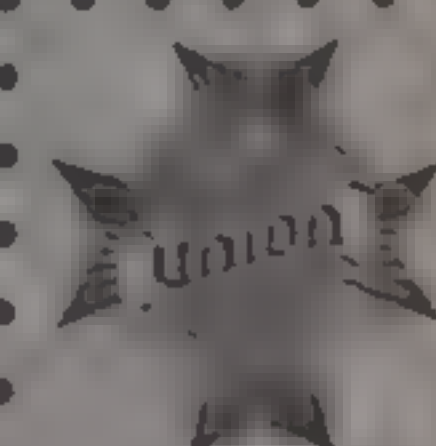
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Québec cuisine turns a mature, graceful 400

JEREMY DERKSEN / snwzoo@vancouverweekly.com

If your only exposure to Québécois cuisine is a greasy, fetid dish of fast-food poutine, you have done your palate a great injustice. While this one stereotypical dish—a limp, gravy-soaked mass of curds and soggy potato—has succeeded in forging its way West, it bears little resemblance to the richer flavours that make up the **Québec** culinary experience. With its French heritage spiced with English, Scottish and Aboriginal influences, the history of cuisine in Québec blends class divisions, national rivalries, local ingredients and natural creativity into a tapestry of taste.

To get a true perspective on the history and the food, you have to go to the source: the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac in Québec City, where executive chef Jean Soulard—a prolific cookbook author—has recently published his first venture into culinary history, *400 Years of Gastronomy in Québec*, to coincide with the city's 400th anniversary celebrations in 2008.

I met Soulard over breakfast, as he prepared his kitchen for the first day of Carnaval. Over my plate of smooth-as-butter duck pâté, regional soft cheeses, fresh fruit and pain au chocolat, we talked about the evolution of flavour in la belle province.

"I am not a historian, I am a cook who loves history," Soulard began with characteristic modesty. But while bowing to historians, he suggested that a chef can interpret food history differently—and that history can ben-



TRAVEL | QUÉBEC

efit from a chef's finely trained eye. "A historian may explain things differently but a cook thinks about it from the perspective of the kitchen."

WHILE IT MAY APPEAR uniformly French, tap it inquisitively and Québécois cuisine fractures into many constituent pieces, like a well-fired crème brûlée. When Samuel de Champlain established the first permanent settlement at the narrows of the St Lawrence in 1608, the settlers had to follow local

example. Aborigines in the area relied on foods like venison, corn and fish, because they were abundant in the area. The French adapted this to their own dishes, making tourtière (a type of meat pie that is traditional French comfort food) with venison rather than pork or veal. Perhaps the best example of

French adaptation is pâté chinois, a Québécois dish mingling beef, corn and potatoes—all locally found ingredients.

But not all things were sourced locally. Local wine, a staple of French diet, didn't measure up to standards. "They were making it here, but the quality was lousy," Soulard explains. "So they imported it, like the Scottish did whiskey."

It may sound cozy, even pastoral, but it wasn't long before conflict intervened on this idyllic setting. English victory on the Plains of Abraham might have spelled doom for French cuisine. Like the French before them, the English and Scottish brought favourite recipes from home as well—lamb and puddings, for example. But they were also open to French food and generally more likely to dine out, and so the French character was retained.

TODAY, QUÉBEC'S regional cuisine reflects this melting pot, with offerings ranging from traditional to ethnic to fusion. At Le Lapin Sauté, in the old quarter on Rue de Petit Champlain, traditional French-Québécois fare such as rabbit, duck, salmon, local cheeses and maple crème brûlée grace the menu. Having never tasted rabbit, I was surprised to discover it had a mild, lean flavour not unlike a less gamy mutton. At Versa, a modern resto-lounge on Rue du Parvis also in the old quarter, it was French-Asian fusion with General Tao chicken flam-béed in Jack Daniels for extra sizzle. And at Restaurant Au Parmesan on Grande Allée, the ceilings lined with likely the world's largest assortment

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of odd bottles, I enjoyed a healthy helping of cannelloni slathered in cheese and oozing spicy meat sauce.

To really get to know Québécois cuisine, though, you must also travel beyond the city's confines. The Charlevoix region, as an example, is renowned for its local producers. Small farms and artisan's boutiques dot the roads north of Québec along the St Lawrence. As Soulard put it, "Historically, we had three kinds of cheese in Québec: cheddar, white cheddar, and marble. Now, we have hun-

Next to poultice, the cabane à sucre is probably the most well known Québec food tradition. Watching steaming hot maple syrup drizzle onto snow, and then rolling it onto a stick and savouring it, is so ingrained in our national consciousness it's easy to forget its origins. As if to remind me, I found a sugar shack tucked away at the Mont-Sainte-Anne ski area, a graying structure with red doors shaded by a forest of white-barked trees. With the sun shining through the trees and refracting off the icy branches, it was a perfect winter scene.

During Carnaval, another traditional favourite is the drink caribou. So named because it came from the aboriginal tradition of drinking caribou's blood to honour the kill, it has since been modified to appeal to more modern tastes. Recipes vary but gen-

erally involve red wine, over-proof alcohol and spices. (For a sample recipe, see the "Traditional Carnaval Caribou" sidebar.) It can be served either warm or cold, but I preferred it warm to bring out the spices and to heat the insides on a cold evening.

IN SOME WAYS, things have come full circle. In 1608, settlers made do with what they had; in 2008, the Québécois are returning with an emphasis on local

products, with a trend towards the "cuisine du terroir." During his 15 years at Le Chateau Frontenac, Jean Soulard has led the rediscovery of regional food for several reasons: freshness, local character and environmental consciousness. From his experience, Soulard believes the popularity of homegrown flavours will only grow in importance. "I believe, like 400 years ago, that we should use the ingredients and foods around us, because it takes much greater energy to get them from other parts of the world," he says passionately, "If we continue to do that we will destroy the planet."

In the Place

Royale in the oldest quarter of the city, there is a chapel dedicated to St Genevieve, the French patron saint of food. Myth still has it that if you carry one of St Genevieve's traditional, thimble-size breads, you will always have enough food. With the feast of riches spread throughout the various restaurants and regions of Québec, it hardly seems necessary. ▽

TRADITIONAL CARNAVAL CARIBOU

During Carnaval, you can buy it at bars, Carnaval beer gardens or restaurant patios selling it out onto the street. It may come in a specially made ice glass (a block of ice with a hole drilled in the centre) or in a cheap plastic wine glass. You can even buy a Bonhomme cane to transport it, which fits most of a bottle.

Despite its ubiquitous presence, it's hard to nail down a standard recipe for making caribou. I was fortunate enough to meet a woman whose family has brewed it for centuries, passing down the following recipe.

Caribou recipe:

Remove two glasses from a bottle of good red wine.
Replace with over-proof vodka.
Add 3/4 tablespoon of maple syrup and one cinnamon stick.
Refrigerate for three weeks, shaking daily to mix ingredients.
After three weeks distilling, remove and drink.

Disclaimer: I have yet to try the recipe myself and therefore take no responsibility for the fruitiness. ▽

FOOD NEWS! DISH WEEKLY

LE VIN EN FUSEE

deVine Wines will take you on a figurative tour of France with the second tasting in their World Wine Basics series, this month focussing on the pays that pays. Seven wines from seven different regions will be offered for you tasting pleasure, complete with information on wine-making in each region, as well as the country as a whole. It's the perfect chance to get your start into the fine world of wine.

PIES WITH THAT

The U of A Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, in conjunction with Edmonton Public Libraries, presents the second film in their Good Medicine Film Festival, and it's pertinent to anyone who has to eat on the go. This Sat, Mar 15 at 2 pm, they'll be showing Morgan Spurlock's Super Size Me, wherein the intrepid (and possibly reckless) director spends a month eating nothing but McDonald's, documenting the inevitable health problems that come with it. ▽

Dish Weekly spills the beans on culinary events in Edmonton. Have an event Edmonton's gourmands simply must know about? E-mail to dish@vuwweekly.com.

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When Scott from Select Wines called and asked me to join him for lunch and a wine tasting on Family Day, I hesitated: isn't it supposed to be spent with the family, after all? Still, I had already been called into the office for a few hours, so I figured I was up for it. We met at Delux Burger Bar with the GM Lindsay Sievwright and Mark Fogleman of DFV wines. The picture was set, four guys, four sandwiches, four bottles of wine; shy of spending the day with my family, this seemed pretty good.

Mark was making his rounds of Canada meeting with restaurateurs, wine writers and others with influence, or in my case pompousness. DFV is the fourth-largest producer of wine in the US, with vineyards in Napa, Sonoma, Lodi and Monterey—in fact, their San Bernabe vineyard is the largest single-owned vineyard in the world. Their impressive collection of vineyards provides grapes for an impressive selection of labels, including Encore, Loredona, Irony, Delicato, Gnarly Head, Clay Station, King Fish, Woodhaven, Twisted, 337 and Stone Barn.

As the four of us sat and discussed our lives, our wine experiences and preferences and, appropriately, our families, we set to sampling four of DFV's products. The first was the 2006 Loredona Monterey Pinot Grigio (\$19). Interestingly, the name



Loredona came from a chance encounter with a woman named Loredona and the winemaker. Not long after the first encounter, the winemaker met someone else with that moniker, and being quite intrigued by the name, christened his new wine with it. This particular wine showed a deep, almost peach colour. It had nice consistent flavours with a warm flow through the evolution of the taste. The fruit had great strength particularly at the front, and left me thinking it would be perfect for the summer patio drinker.

NEXT WE CRACKED open a 2006 Clay Station Viogner (\$20). This wine comes from the Clay Station vineyard in Lodi and is aged entirely in stainless steel casks. Light in colour with a sharp nose, this wine was rich with tannins at the front. I found it tart as I began tasting it but levelled out with a nice follow through. I did find the fruit a tad overwhelming, and though this was nice overall, I found the Pinot Grigio better.

As we placed our orders for lunch, Scott offered us some 2004 Clay Station Petite Sirah (\$20), a multiple-award-winning wine that I was definitely looking forward to. This oak-aged very deep red, almost inky wine, emitted a warm, consistent nose, while its flavours were a little tart with smooth tannins. At first taste, it was a nice but far from amazing bottle of wine.

Then our food arrived. As hungry as I was, I dove into my chicken sandwich, topped with bacon, red pepper and a hint

of spice. Why do I mention the food in a wine article? Because my next sip of the Petite Sirah exploded in my mouth. Flavours of spice and black cherry became evident. The size of the wine and its texture seemed to quantifiably improve with food. Often, I find wine pairing with food to be a bit arbitrary, usually left to individual tastes, but this wine must be experienced with food.

Lastly, we sampled a bottle of 2005 337 Lodi Cabernet Sauvignon (\$20). 337 is the name of the vine clone that produces most Cabernet in France and Napa. DFV's Lodi vineyard exports many of their grapes to Napa for blending of some of the finest Cabs in the valley. In order for the Napa wineries to claim their wines as Napa, they must source most of their grapes from the valley, but many use Lodi fruit to round out their wines, and 337's wine is sourced 86 per cent from Lodi and 14 per cent from Napa. This deep dark red wine has a huge nose with hints of spice and blackberry. Huge tannins welcome you on the first taste and they are followed by rich, strong fruit, flowing very well and letting the tannins slip away. This wine will compete well with rich foods and strong flavours.

Overall, it was exciting to see such good wine produced at such an affordable price: all were great buys with really good flavours. My personal favourite was the Petite Sirah, but for these prices, they are all worth a try—maybe even for your whole family. ♥

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Plenty of reasons to Go Gi to Bul Go Gi

JAN. HOSTIN / janes.vueweekly.com

We live in a society that embraces instant gratification, disposable anything and everything, and trends that pass more quickly than a New Years resolution. Restaurants come and go all the time, vulnerable to the whims and fads of the moment, so when you hear about one that has stayed in business for 35 years, it certainly makes you take notice.

Bul Go Gi House first opened its doors in 1973, it was the first Korean restaurant in Edmonton. Jason Park, who has owned the Bonnie Doon restaurant for the last 27 years, attributes much of its success to a large clientele of steady customers who keep coming back for their favourite dishes. Because of that, the menu is periodically tweaked with some items being added and some dropped, but has stayed relatively the same for all those years.

I've often thought of making the journey to Bul Go Gi but something always seemed to get in the way. Wanting to try this Edmonton institution, my husband and I actually picked a date on our eternally busy calendar, we found a quiet Monday night that was free of obligations.

The highly anticipated Monday arrived and we arrived at the plain little restaurant in an equally plain neighbourhood strip mall. At first it looked like the ample parking lot was full, but we managed to squeeze into the last spot, at the far end. Apparently 35 years leads to a lot of repeat customers.

Bul Go Gi makes no illusion of grandeur. From the cluttered boxy entrance, tacky orange vinyl take-out bench and cafeteria-style interior to the white paper placemats (although they did have frilled edges) carefully placed on the somewhat rickety-looking tables, this place was definitely not about the ambience. It was toasty warm, though, and the enticing smell drew us further into the room.

Take-out must have been the order of the day, as there were only a couple of other occupied tables. While trying to inconspicuously inspect the contents of various dishes at other tables, I couldn't help but notice a few pizza boxes on a table in the back: a group of about eight people were enthusiastically making short work of gooey slices of pizza. Upon closer inspection I was even more surprised to discover that these pizza lovers were Bul Go Gi staff members. Hoping that wasn't indicative of the quality of the food, we ordered two Korean beers (Hite, \$5.45 each) and dived into the lengthy menu.

Our server, although very friendly and attentive, wasn't extremely helpful. When asked about the difference between the offerings under Soups and those under Hot Pot Soups, he stated that "the hot pot soups are hotter since they come in a hot pot." Oh. Then, when asked what was in the Dae-Goo-Mae-

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Woon-Tang, he quoted exactly what the menu said, cod and vegetables. When asked what kind of vegetables, he stated "every kind." At that point we decided to just use the menu as a guide and sip our mild but refreshing beer.

Despite the lack of information, we decided soup was a must, and so ordered the Dae-Goo-Mae-Woon-Tang (black cod with vegetables in a hot pot, \$13.95). We also needed to try the infamous Bul-Go-Gi (marinated beef with vegetables, \$10.45) and threw in Doah-Ji-Bul-Go-Gi (marinated spicy pork with vegetables, \$11.75), for good measure.

IN NO TIME AT ALL a pitcher of water was deposited at the table, along with a pot of steamed rice (covered, to keep it hot), some kimchi and marinated bean sprouts. The kimchi, kind of like pickled cabbage, was hot and spicy and went well with the beer. The bean sprouts, in contrast, were cool and crunchy. Some people eat these like appetizers and some people use them as condiments. We did a little of both.

We barely had sampling time before the bul-go-gi arrived. Strips of tender beef mingled with slivers of carrots, cabbage and bean sprouts. It wasn't quite as saucy as I was expecting, but the typical Korean flavours of soy sauce, ginger and garlic shone through. After a few bites came the arrival of the pork. Not great planning on our part—the components of this dish were essentially the same as the bul-go-gi, but with pork instead of beef. It did have much more sauce though, which was like a rich, red barbeque sauce with a bit of a bite. The spicy red pepper wasn't immediately evident, but it certainly let us know it was there after just a few bites.

The last dish that came, my favorite, was the spicy black cod and vegetable soup in a hot pot. (And yes, the pot was definitely hot.) The aroma alone made my nose start to run. Swimming in the pungent and delicious broth heady with garlic and red chili paste were chunks of firm zucchini, flaky cod, silky tofu and crisp bean sprouts. Not exactly "every vegetable"; a bit more variety would have been nice, but it worked. It was nice to see the dishes come out rather haphazardly; it meant that each was served as soon as it was prepared.

When our bill made its way to the table we were past full but had barely dented the bul-go-gi and doah-ji-bul-go-gi—now we had dinner for another night. The sticks of Wrigley's gum that came with the bill were a welcome touch; the garlic was lingering long after the last bite was enjoyed.

Bul Go Gi House is friendly, historic, tasty and, at times, amusing. I certainly think we fared better that night than the staff with their take-out pizza. ♥

They bleed Red for their mountain

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vancouverweekly.com

The reputation of Red Mountain precedes it—a hill known for powder, steep and challenging terrain. Yet despite all I'd heard about it over the years, I'd never made it out to Rossland. It was time to pay my dues, starting with the drive itself.

We left Fernie relatively early, wanting to clear the Kootenay pass between Creston and Salmo in the daylight. The Crowsnest Highway crests here at 1770 metres, which can make for some pretty hairy winter—or even summer—driving. Sure enough, a clear day in Creston turned into a soupy mix of fog and blowing snow before we started our descent into Salmo.

Rossland is a picturesque little town about nine kilometres up Hwy 3B from Trail, BC. The main drag covers about three blocks, with nary a big-box megamart. We stopped by Ferraro Foods to pick up some weekend groceries and then made a short, 10-minute drive up to the hill.

The lords of snow hadn't left Red behind this season, but the eight-foot mounds made it difficult to navigate the small village. Not that we were complaining. Checking into our spacious room in the Silver Tip—a short two-minute hike to the hill's base—we immediately took note of our personal hot tub tucked away in an alcove of our balcony; it would be a perfect way to relax our weary muscles.

RED'S RICH HISTORY goes back over 100 years, with the first recorded Canadian downhill race held in 1896. Until the 1930s, when the hill built a jump, a cabin and a gas-powered rope tow, skiers would explore old mining and logging roads.

Red's main lodge was built in the 1940s, and its first chairlift was put up in 1947. The following decades saw some major expansion, including the addition of Granite Mountain to its terrain. And in 1968, Red hosted the first Canadian World Cup championship race. The hill's long storied racer pedigree—Nancy Greene among them—is proudly displayed in the photos that line Rafter's Lounge of the main lodge.

Things began to shift in 1989 when the hill's custodian, Red Mountain Ski Club, found itself in some serious debt and made the difficult decision to sell it to private investors.

These days, Red is undergoing expansion. Over the next 10 years or so, the hill will grow from its current 1685 skiable acres to 4200; its two-mountain (Red and Granite) experience will become a four-mountain extravaganza.

The current owners claim that they want to maintain the integrity of the hill's community feel. They're taking initiatives to facilitate four-season living by the hill—as

PRIDE | RED MOUNTAIN

opposed to the empty feel of many resorts during the off-season—as well as trying to foster a sense of solidarity in the diverse citizenry that populates the town, from artist to athlete. However, not everybody is excited about the growth. Recently, some 900 area citizens signed a petition to register their dissatisfaction with a proposed golf course just west of the hill.

TO US, THOUGH, Red Mountain felt intimate and homey. Its \$58 lift ticket keeps the day in the affordable range, too. Mike, our ski host, was like a proud father showing us his firstborn. Riding up the Silverlode Chair on Granite Mountain, he shared some of the hill's story before taking us down the cruiser Northern Belle to get us warmed up. I think he just wanted to make sure that we could ski—because he sure could.

Before retiring, Mike and his wife went looking for a place to winter. They checked out resorts across BC but they kept coming back to Red and it wasn't difficult to see why they would. Even on a weekend, the lift lines were minimal, and there was a real sense of camaraderie amongst the riders. It was once we were on the slopes, however, that I was really sold.

Not only were the runs all but vacant, it's also next to impossible to get lost on the hill—and our first day on the hill, this was important. The fog was thick up top, easily swallowing the chair ahead of ours. Anywhere you decide to make your descent, near the bottom you'll hit a cat-track that will take you right back to the lift.

It wasn't long before we headed into the trees to gain some perspective. We would have anyway—the plethora of gladed runs for both intermediate and advanced skiers levels is one of the hill's great appeals. The snow was plentiful and just-below-zero temperatures made it soft to bounce around in. The runs on the backside of Granite—from which you can ride the Paradise Chair or make your way ingeniously 'round back to the front—were superb. From Ruby Tuesday all the way over to the Powder Fields there are so many treed runs to choose from that it would be difficult to ski exactly the same line more than once.

Mike patiently saw us through the unfamiliar terrain, always ahead and always waiting. We had to admit to ourselves that we'd been schooled. We finished our day on Red Mountain picking various lines through Poochies Trees before our weary legs led into Rafter's Lounge for a brew or two. And then it wasn't long before our hot tub called out to us. ▽

RED MOUNTAIN is no stranger to hosting events. It's the perfect venue with its intimacy and snowfall. When we arrived, the Red Bull Cold Rush was just finishing up. It was a bonanza of all manner of skiing, testing riders' ability at hucking cliffs, freeriding and a summit approach (won handily by Golden's Dave Treadway).

March 6 - 9 the mountain hosted the first Rossland Pride, with a portion of ticket prices going to the Aids Network for the Kootenay Boundary region. And for your viewing—or riding—pleasure, the Industrial Triple Crown of Skiing and Snowboarding (Mar 20 - 22) showcases a rail jam, as well as a boardercross and skiercross. ▽



Can a feisty feline hang with the tomcats?

BOBBI BARBARICH / bobbi@vuwweekly.com

His confident voice to the 12 strange male faces in the van. A dozen speculative looks sized me up and down. I had met these men only 14 hours before at the Red Shutter Inn at Red Mountain Resort. And now I was going cat skiing with them ... the only girl, and one of only two snowboarders in the group.

I had come to Red in hopes of attending a Bettygohard snowboarding retreat. I'd been talking with Natasha Lockey about her all-female progressive action sports community for several weeks, and she invited me to join them. Unfortunately, the program was cancelled because not enough women registered. And thus I found myself stuck with the men. Again.

It's unlikely I would ever be in the same situation with 12 other girls. It's difficult to get us all together—women wear a wardrobe of hats and action sports aren't always on the top of the list. Having a sports community for girls in a male dominated sport is therefore critically needed, but often poorly attended. Girls are also commonly afraid to say they can huck it. And men are too quick to believe the stereotype.

AFTER A 30-MINUTE car ride from Red to Mount Mackie, the Big Red Cat dropped us on the ridge overlooking tight glades and heavy, wet snow. Our lead guide shouted over the men's excited din. "Partner up! You'll be calling to each other throughout the trees so as not to get separated."

I looked around. There were eight telemarkers, five skiers and one boarder. Thirteen men including the guides, and me. The guys, who ranged in skill from 30 years experience to professional mountain guides, ended their talk of Alta and Aspen and quickly chose partners.

All except me. I kicked the snow a bit and put my hand up, stating the obvious. "I don't have a partner." A tall guy with a kind smile hesitated, then obliged. "I'll try not to hold you up," I said, feeling the pressure of the others' obvious assessment. "Oh, that's ok," Kevin replied and gave me

RIDE BIG RED CATS

a half-shrug.

The others jumped into the trees. I nodded at my partner to go ahead of me. The trees were indeed very tight and there were a lot of them. It was only my second day on my whole new set-up, and the first day my new ride had christened me with five face plants. I didn't want that to happen today.

I managed to keep my face out of

the dirt, but I did catch a branch in the chin as I scooted between two trees. I reached the meeting point ahead of my partner and a few others, so I felt pretty good

"Bobbi go hard," said Burly, our tail guide. "You're bleeding already. Nice," he said with an approving smile

"You should see the tree," I smirked. The cat crawled over to us and scratched and clawed up to another ridge. I balked at the long traverse past

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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CONDITIONS REPORT

Local

Rabbit Hill — 60cm base, no new snow. All runs and lifts open.
Snow Valley — 60cm base, no new snow. All runs and lifts open.
Sun Ridge — 60cm base, no new snow. All runs and lifts open.
Edmonton Ski Club — All runs and lifts are open.

Alberta

Canada Olympic Park — 100cm base, no new snow.
Castle Mountain — 117-279cm base, no new snow. 5 lifts and 61 runs open.
Lake Louise — 161-172cm base, 5cm of new snow. All lifts and 132 runs open.
Marmot Basin — 109cm base, no new snow. All lifts and 83 runs open.
Mt. Norquay — 60-85cm base, no new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Nakiska — 50-105cm base, no new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Sunshine Village — 168cm base, 6cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Tawatinaw — 60cm base, 10cm of new snow. All lifts and 23 runs open.

B.C.

Apex — 207cm base, 6cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Big White — 255cm base, 9cm of new snow. 15 lifts and 113 runs open.
Fernie — 314cm base, 13cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Kicking Horse — 184cm base, 5cm of new snow.
Kimberley — 201cm base, 5cm of new snow. 5 lifts and all runs open.
Mt. Washington — 397cm base, 19cm of new snow. All runs open.
Panorama — 129cm base, 6cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Powder King — 302-455cm base, 29cm of new snow.
Red Mountain — 190cm base, 2cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Revelstoke — 200-221cm base, 3 lifts and all trails open.
Silver Star — 225cm base, 11cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Sun Peaks — 170-221cm base, 18cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Whistler/Blackcomb — 242cm base, 31cm of new snow. 23 lifts and all runs open.
White Water — 260cm base, 18cm of new snow. All lifts and 11 runs open.

U.S.A.

49 North — 266-355cm base, no new snow. 3 lifts and 68 runs open.
Big Sky — 170-256cm base, no new snow.
Crystal Mountain — 183cm base, 45 runs, 7 lifts open.
Great Divide — 89-114cm base, 4 lifts and 80 runs open.
Lockout Pass — 264-388cm base, 8cm of new snow.
Mt. Spokane — 246-333cm base, 5cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Schweitzer Mt. — 231-340cm base, 5cm of new snow. 8 lifts and 70 runs open.
Silver Mt. Resort — 216-320cm base, 6cm of new snow. 8 lifts and 84 runs open.
Sun Valley — 91-208cm base, 14 lifts and 87 runs open.

All conditions accurate as of March 12, 2008

BIG RED CATS

Continued from previous page

an open bowl. "Make sure you don't fall in there," warned Dougie Lama. "That's big time avy danger."

As I scuttled along the pounded out traverse, painfully aware of my partner before me and the tail gunner behind, I looked over the cornice to the open bowl ... and caught my toe edge. Within a heartbeat, I was launched over the cornice. I landed with my head down, folded in half with my board at my nose. I started to slide. Just before I was swept away, I grabbed the only tree on the face, stopping myself from careening down the steep slope.

Nauseously aware of my precarious predicament, I carefully dropped my toe edge past my head and got onto my knees. I stuck my arms elbow-deep into the cornice and looked up at Burly.

This free was a mix of shock and terror. Mouth open, eyes wide, he stepped to the edge to assess my situation. "Let me help you," he offered. "Nope. I don't need it." I responded, determined to save my own life. I repeated sticking my arms into the snow and jumping upward with my board, until I crawled over the ridge.

"That's pretty hard work," observed Burly. I was sweating and shaky. "Let's go," I shrugged and headed into the trees.

MY DAY IMPROVED from there, as I got more used to my board and more comfortable with the guys. I was constantly reminded of my handicap, but the boys were gracious in saying I was the most able-bodied disabled person they'd ridden with. Not that I had the choice to be otherwise.

The sun pushed its way out of the clouds and we continued dropping into untouched territory. Big Red Cats recent-

ly opened a north-facing area of Mackie, and our trip was only the second to experience the graciously treed area broken by small pleasure meadows.

With sunshine raging, it felt like spring skiing. The sky was crystal blue and close enough to touch. We ended the day riding through a clear-cut gentle slope, sun glinting off our goggles and over the mountaintops.

The kitty picked us up at 4 pm. As if I wasn't drunk enough on adrenaline beer and tequila flowed through the cab as we reviewed the day and regaled each other with which runs and hits were the finest. I sat back and listened. While I wasn't one of them these 12 guys were gracious enough to test and then accept me. I've realized that's the card women have been dealt and it seemed more than fitting that I should have ended up there—having meant to attend a women's program, but circumstances evolved into proving myself as a female rider. ▽

Become a movie star at Castle Mountain

SNOW ZONE

FALL LINES

MARY HOLSTEN
 mholst@cmountain.com

On Mar 21 - 22, Castle Mountain Resort near Pincher Creek is hosting its first Powder Tails Film Festival. This is open to amateur moviemakers only and there are many categories to enter: Action,

Story Line, Comedy and Bloopers. There are some pretty serious rules like no profanity and nudity and definitely no serious injury shots. If you are interested you better get started this weekend. Moviemakers are encouraged to shoot a five-minute DVD formatted video that needs to be entered by the evening of Sun, Mar 16. Viewing and judging takes place on Sat, Mar 22. If you just want to check it out and get ready for next year

it's definitely not a wasted weekend because conditions are great this time of year. There's at least 260 centimetres settled at mid mountain and even if it doesn't snow, the night winds can create a pretty good wind sift that feels like a 10 cm dump. If you do make it down this Friday you can take in hypnotist Colin Christopher presenting his Max Power Experience. You might even be able to work that into your movie theme. ▽

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Secrets to nordic skiing at iconic Louise

DAVE BUCHANAN / daveb@vancouverweekly.com
With THERESA AGNEW

Lake Louise could very well be the most heavily visited tourist destination in the Canadian Rockies. Anyone who's ever been knows why: the emerald green lake, the grand Chateau, the magnificent Victoria glacier (named after the Queen herself), the soaring mountain peaks and some of the most spectacular hiking and skiing on the continent.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Lake Louise is more than just a postcard-perfect, famous vacation spot—it's an iconic place that is now a kind of meta-tourist attraction and spectacle, almost as much about the hoards of bus tourists as the stunning vistas.

In the winter, Lake Louise means downhill skiing for most people, but it's also a terrific spot for nordic skiing. As we discovered when we spent four days exploring the cross-country trails in the area. And despite the crowds, the requisite ice sculptures and the \$20 bowls of muesli, the magic is still there.

Naturally, the Chateau area itself is lousy with tourists. Tour buses deposit people in the parking lots all day, even in February. Strolling the grounds or skating on the zambonied "pond" in front of the Chateau, you'll hear a dozen different languages and accidentally blunder into numerous photographs. This is no peaceful getaway spot.

But the spectacular view across the lake from the shore of the Chateau makes it worth all the fuss. Skiing across the lake, a must-do for any nordic skier, is a surreal experience. On the north shore, the grand Chateau dominates, while on the south side the vast Victoria glacier looms, the former expanding while the latter, sadly, is shrinking.

The actual skiing across the lake, though, is the kind of thing you only need to do once. The trail is flat and much of it gets mangled by tourists who stomp all over the tracks and let their canines cavort (or worse) on it. The day we were there, it didn't help that the sun had turned

NORDIC LAKE LOUISE

much of the exposed trails into ice

AT THE FAR SIDE of the lake, another trail loops back to the Chateau through the woods below the Agnes Lake teahouse trail (closed for winter). This Shoreline Trail offers a little more up and down, and takes you to the frozen Louise Falls, but it too was in rough shape, littered with spruce needles and great gobs of tree snow.

The truly fine cross-country trails here are just off the lake, where bus tourists rarely venture. Our favourite was the Fairview Loop, an eight-kilometre, mostly classic circuit that is best accessed from the Moraine Lake Road parking area, about halfway up from the village to the lake. Most of this trail winds up through thick forest before hitting a long, shaggy downhill stretch that hooks back up with Moraine Lake Road.

The snow along this trail was astonishing; underneath our skis there had to be two metres of the fluffy stuff. But it's the shocking whiteness of it all that entrances city dwellers accustomed to grim road-slush. We encountered a fair number of skiers on the Fairview Loop, many with the obligatory rental numbers on their boots, but none of them looked particularly slick, and no one seemed to be in a hurry. Simply to be alive and in the sunshine gliding across such perfect snow was about all anyone could ask for.

Near the beginning of our loop, we passed a grinning elderly couple, ancient as glaciers and moving at about the same rate, trucking slowly in the opposite direction. Before we could even say "Hi," the old gal announced, apropos of everything, "You never know what to expect!"

It was hard to tell if she was talking about the trails or life in general. In any event, we were glad for her appreciation of mystery; it's heartening to see the magic of Lake Louise lives on. ♥

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'88 legacy propels Canadian athletes towards greater success in 2010

ANDREW DERKSEN / andrew@vancouverweekly.com

Racing down the Olympic track with my heart pounding and stomach performing flips, it was difficult not to picture the '88 Jamaican Bobsled team capsizing their sled in the infamous 270° Kreisel turn. Those images scared me. Adrenalin pumping, sick-to-my-stomach kind of scared. I wasn't expecting to be so afraid.

I've signed a lot of waiver forms; I

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

know the story. That didn't stop the butterflies from churning in my gut when I pulled on my helmet. Those butterflies were right. Hurtling into a 270° corner at 120 km/hr in a rattling metal sled is not something to be taken lightly. For 60.96 seconds and 1500 meters of ice, my internal organs battled to see which could rise the highest in my throat. When we slid to a stop, six wobbly legs took Bambi steps to some rather comfortable-looking concrete.

Once on solid ground, compatriots Rob, James and I high-fived and back-slapped congratulations for our less-than-record-setting time. Sure-footed Dallas Butcher, our driver, shook our hands with a knowing smile. With relief came revelation. I had just raced down the same track Pierre Leuders

and other world champions have raced and trained on for twenty years. I had survived the Kreisel (German for circle) turn unscathed. And it was fun in the words of the Jamaicans, "Feel the rhythm, feel the rhyme, come on now, it's bobsled time." (*Cool Runnings*, man.)

FEW ALBERTANS ALIVE at the time have forgotten fan favourites like the Jamaican Bobsled team or Eddie the Eagle. Neither will they have forgotten Karen Percy or Elizabeth Manley, homegrown girls that captured the hearts of Albertans and inspired a generation of athletes. The '88 Winter Games brought 1423 athletes from 57 nations to compete in Alberta, and they brought the Olympic spirit with them. Two decades ago, a torch was relayed 18 000 kilometers around the globe to start a flame in Calgary, and that flame is still burning bright.

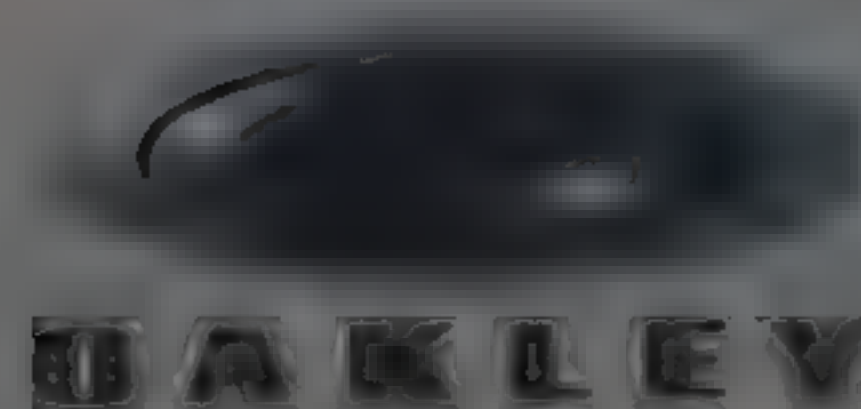
It is burning in people like Dallas Butcher. After six seasons, Dallas

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retired from competitive bobsled and is now coaching with the Alberta Bobsled Association and the Canadian and American development teams. "A year round commitment is required to be competitive and successful in bobsleigh," says Dallas, "In the off-season, athletes train three to four hours a day, six days a week. On-ice training in the winter is usually blocks of three to four days consecutively, doing two to three runs per day."

Those runs add up, and the opportunity to race on an Olympic track every day is the most indispensable aspect of an athlete's training. The '88 legacy not only provided us with inspirational memories and a deep sense of pride, but it also gave us physical space to foster the growth of future Olympians. Nakiska, site of the Alpine events of '88, continues to play an important role in the development of Canada's skiers and snowboarders. Home to four different Alpine ski clubs, they host races continually. Canada Olympic Park (COP) has world-class facilities for training athletes in bobsled, luge, skeleton, ski jumping, and freestyle skiing and snowboarding. Unique in its location inside Calgary's city limits, COP is the most accessible and visible reminder of '88. It is maintained by the Calgary Olympic Development Association (CODA), which formed 52 years ago to bring the Olympics to Calgary, and transformed itself after the Games were held. The organization now maintains the legacy of the games, supporting athlete development at all levels and advocating active lifestyles for everyone.

At COP, CODA has created the world's only "ice house," a year-round start training facility for Canada's bobsled, luge and skeleton athletes. They have also developed one of the most successful ski and snowboard schools in Canada so that everybody can participate in winter sports.

And COP is just the tip of the iceberg. Among other projects and facilities, CODA also helps maintain the Olympic Oval, owns and operates the Canmore Nordic Center and has provided winter sport athletes with year-round training facilities on the Haig

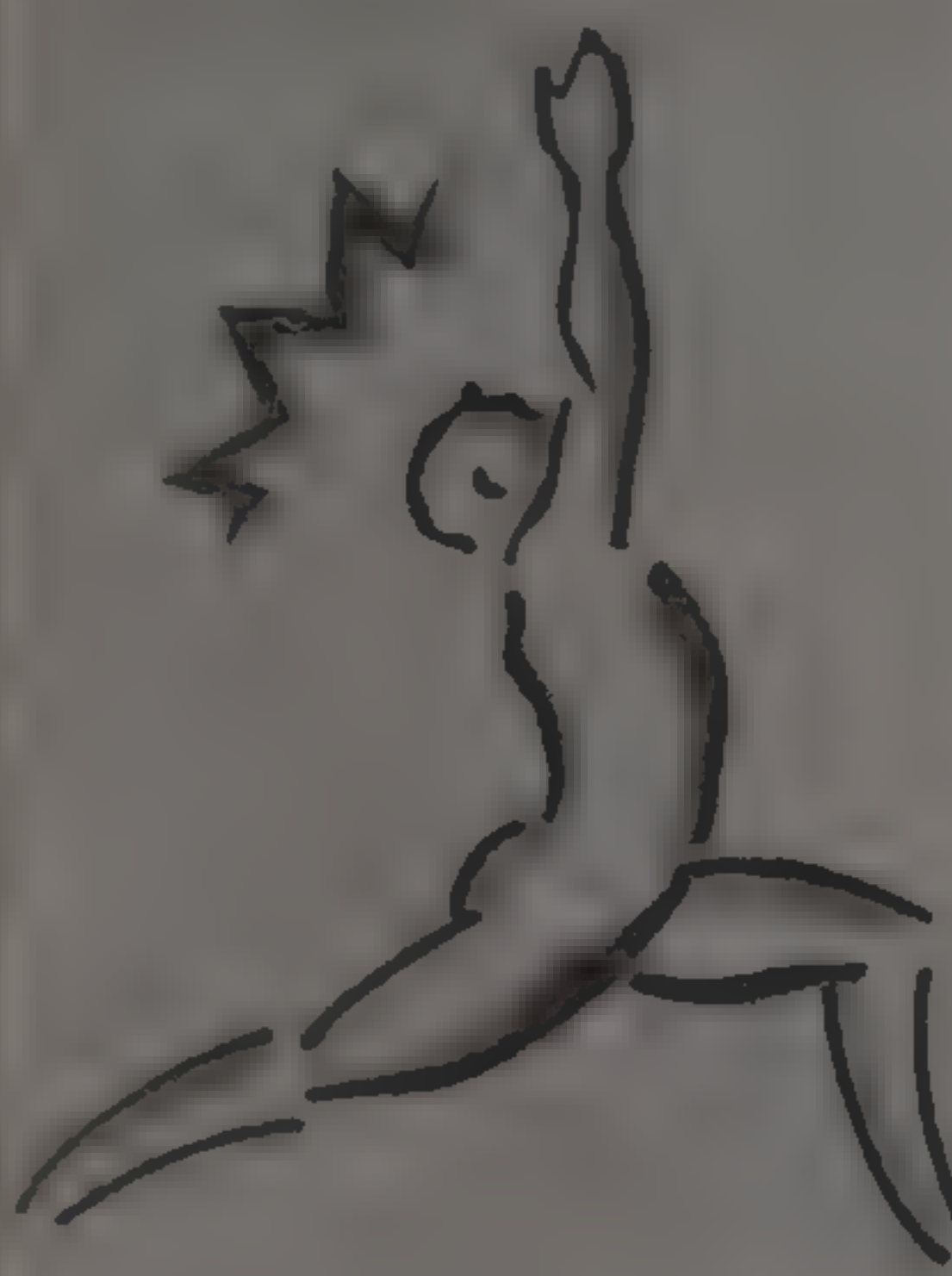


and Farnham glaciers. CODA's commitment to athlete development has helped Canada's Olympic athletes increase medal counts in every Winter Games since '88 (in which five medals were won), culminating in a record-setting 24 medals in Torino in 2006.

IN VANCOUVER 2010, expect to cheer your countrymen to new records of achievement. Canadians will rejoice in our athletes' successes and share in the moments of pure joy created by winning medals and breaking records. But the medals are only symbols. They are symbols of the hours of toil put in by athletes, coaches and countless volunteers; the years of development fostered by families and communities; the legacy of commitment shown by organizations like CODA. These moments are not just tributes to an individual's athletic abil-

ity; they are signs of a culture devoted to enhancing human experience through sport.

Every moment of elation is simply an endpoint to years of the everyday. Every day, people like Dallas Butcher sacrifice to participate in sports they love. Every day, CODA looks for new ways to help Olympians compete at higher levels. Every day, sport brings people together, whether they are just walking from around the corner to the local ice rink, or coming from all corners of the world to converge on Vancouver. And every day at COP and Nakiska everyday people take their recreation alongside Olympic veterans and hopefuls as they race down tracks and mountains or launch off jumps, hurling themselves to new speeds and new heights, hoping to one day have their sixty-second piece of history. ▼



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Alive with the sound of music?

LAURA ENGLAND / laura@vnewest.com

"I want to fall ... Try and cross me. Take me, tease me." No, not the mantra for the thoroughly undecided and somewhat confused, but the lyrics from "Battle of One" by 30 Seconds to Mars, the first song used in the latest Warren Miller movie, *Playground*. Miller believes in the symbiosis between music and the ski industry and deftly illustrates how snow enthusiasts feed off musical energy.

But does everyone else feel the same? Does your favourite song blaring through your headphones take your ski run to a whole different level, or does it ruin the silence of nature? Is a park not a park unless Pennywise is shaking the ground through the loudspeakers? In short, does music play a role in your ski hill experience, and if so, what form does it take?

It's hard to come up with another sport in which music is prevalent at every stage. Tunes accompany the drive to the ski hill whether on your own or in a bus. Walking through the parking lot on your way to the gondola, snippets of everything from acid jazz to ska punk can be heard while people slip on their ski pants and lace up their boots. On-hill, music comes from several sources—the speakers in the day lodge and terrain park, or live on an outdoor patio.

Once you're at the top of the hill however, the choice is yours whether or not to fill the silence. Some find music distracting; others are invigorated and find themselves carving turns in time with the beat. Some would only slap on some headphones if they were skiing alone, but they never are, so they don't.

Small and lightweight, the iPod has made listening to music while skiing or boarding easier than ever. Compile a playlist, strap on your helmet with the built-in headphones and you've got your entertainment laid out for the day.

BUT WHAT KIND of music are people listening to, and does your playlist change if you're a boarder or a skier? Does your mode of snow transportation inherently communicate something about your musical personality?

Judging from a very informal chairlift survey I conducted, it would appear that musical preference is totally individual and does not depend on whether you prefer one plank or two. Although Air Supply did come up in one surveyed person's playlist, the majority of songs tended to be very upbeat and intense. But one cannot automatically assume that snowboarders naturally drift toward punk, which is good news for those 35-year-old boarders (unless that's their thing of course).

So where does safety fit into the scheme of things? You've got to remember you're not the only person on a run and if you're rockin' out to Millencolin are you going to hear that guy who's just slid in beside you from another run? Some people compromise by turning down the volume on

their headphones but doesn't that make the whole idea a little pointless?

Some avoid the issue altogether by listening to music on the deck at the end of their ski day while quaffing a brew. Many resorts realize this can be a significant draw for visitors so they provide an excellent venue for some pretty amazing live bands. Canadian tribute band BC/DC is a fixture on the patio at Sunshine Village and will be returning again this year in May. Resorts also command some pretty big names such as Sam Roberts and, before breaking up, Big Sugar and I Mother Earth. Many a rock star has donned a toque and endured frozen fingers.

So what is your perfect ski day? Nothing but the sounds of the wind in the trees or a pounding techno beat? If the idea of a soundtrack for your ski run interests you, what songs would you choose? My top five picks would be "How Soon is Now" by the Smiths, "Da Funk" by Daft Punk, "Just Because" by Jane's Addiction, "Bittersweet Symphony" by the Verve, and "Like a Stone" by Audioslave. But that's just me. (I'm a boarder—can you tell?) ▼

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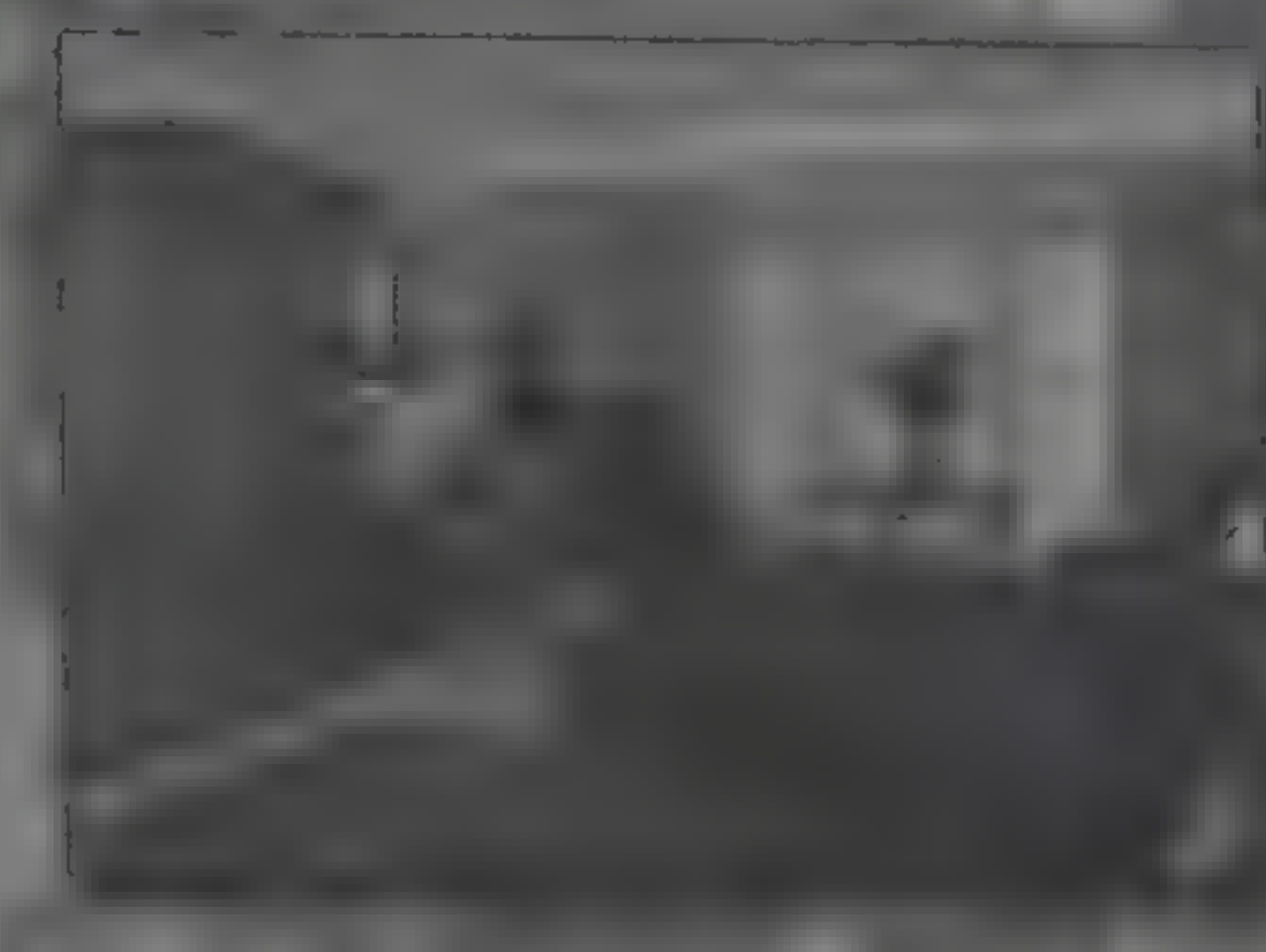
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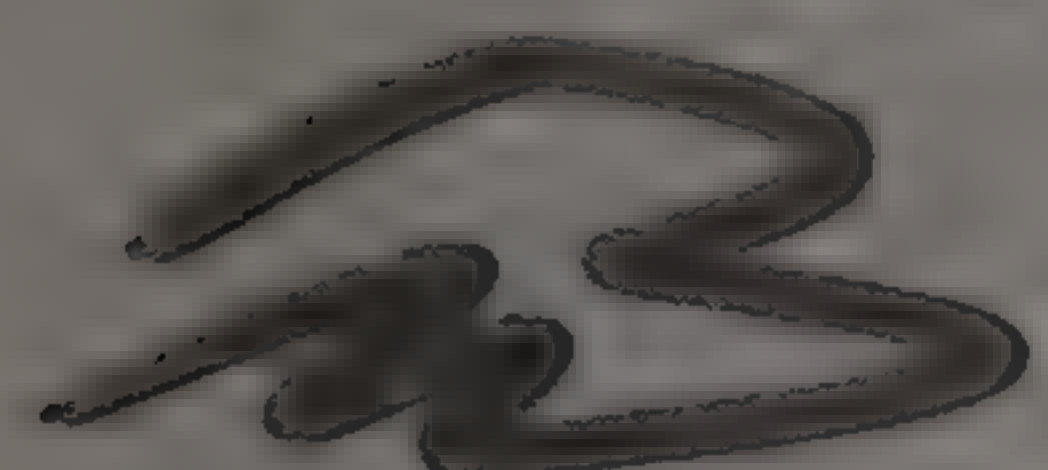
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Lonesome me: bickering brothers mark Arnold's directing debut

JULIEN ARNOLD AND CHRIS BULLOUGH GET DEEP INTO MARTIN MCDONAGH'S *THE LONESOME WEST*

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vultureweekly.com

It's been a difficult few months for Julien Arnold. In September, the local acting dynamo suffered a heart attack during a rehearsal for the Citadel's season-opening production of *Noises Off*. And while the Citadel managed to recast the show in the 11th hour, Arnold had to take it easy, passing up his traditional role as Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol* to continue his recovery. But he's already been up and acting again in 2008, and now, he's set to open his professional directing debut of Martin McDonagh's *The Lonesome West*. Looking at the guy, you'd be hard pressed to tell that he'd gone through serious heart trauma mere months before.

They have the most amazing facilities here in Edmonton for heart attacks, and they have great follow-up," Arnold explains. "It's probably one of the best places in North America to have a heart problem. We're still waiting to see what happens, but I feel pretty much back to normal."

Arnold's in good spirits: immediately after finishing that sentence, he pretends to slump dead on the table. Comedy is on his mind: having graduated from the U of A's MFA directing program last year, this run of *The Lonesome West* is a remount of his production at the school, featuring two of the same actors and a pair of new ones including Chris Bullough, who needed

little convincing to get involved.

"I didn't even read the play," Bullough laughs. "I just trusted it would be a great project. After I read the play it was like a nice little cherry on top 'Oh, hey, what an amazing play'"

THE LONESOME WEST portrays brotherly love at its most biting. The sunset chapter in a trilogy of plays, Bullough plays Father Welsh, a whiskey-faulted priest attempting to reconcile spiteful brothers Valene (Colin Doyle) and Coleman (James Hamilton) in the aftermath of their father's questionable demise, while dealing with a foul-mouthed 17-year-old (Clance Eckford) who happens to provide the town's supply of moonshine. Welsh has his work cut out for him: the brothers are close enough to know exactly how to ruin a perfectly good ceasefire, holding everything they can against each other, including their shared faith.

"Religion is, for the boys, very much like a tool to see who's better than the other. It's like, 'Don't be swearin' in front of the saints,'" says Bullough. "It's part of that Catholic thing, that if you say enough Hail Mary's or do your penance, you're forgiven for that sin."

But for all of that fraternal maliciousness, the script is a comedy, albeit a dark one, and finding the right actors to juggle the laughter in this type of show isn't as easy as you'd think.

COVER

THE MARTIN MCDONAGH PLAY
THE LONESOME WEST
DIRECTED BY JULIEN ARNOLD
WRITTEN BY MARTIN MCDONAGH
STARRING CHRIS BULLOUGH, COLIN DOYLE,
CLANCE ECKFORD, JAMES HAMILTON
THE ROXY THEATRE (10708 - 124 ST), \$15 - 25

"You have to hire actors who have what I call the comedy bone," Arnold explains. "It's a difficult thing to teach. Sometimes there are wonderful actors who just don't seem to get comedy as easily, and there are some who just know [the] timing and the feel of the characters."

"It's also a question of pitch," he continues. "Especially with Martin McDonagh's script, it would be easy to go over the top with this comedy. If you pitch a comedy too high, it could fall flat. If you pitch it too low, make it too realistic, then it can fall flat too. You're mining; you want to get to that seam of comedy gold."

"Here it is," he gestures, mimicking drilling for rich laughs with his hand. "Not funny, not funny, not funny, Funny!"

BULLOUGH IS NO STRANGER to feuding siblings. Aside from having a real brother of his own, he recently played one-half of a bickering pair in the world premiere of *Choke*, and is likely the run's most experienced on-set

expert for brotherly battles, and how to stop them for good.

"Blow one of their heads off; take one out of the equation," he jokes, before offering a more sincere answer. "You get away from each other. It's almost like there's a muscle memory that knows exactly where that button is, and before you know it, you're fighting. You do have to get away from each other [because] they know exactly where your button is, too."

Bullough sees a connection between McDonagh's bickering brothers and the pair he was a part of in *Choke* beyond the fact that they're at each other's throats, though.

"I think both sets of brothers are very similar," he adds. "They're stunted, because they haven't truly experienced a huge part of their life. They're stuck in teenage land. It's almost like they can't see past that; they think this is what life is, and that gets you down. When you're down, you get angry at the people around you, and you take it out on them."

"You end up blaming the other people for what you feel inside, not realizing that you can do something about that," he adds, as discussion turns to the relationship between the actors who get to be so vile to each other.

Doyle and Hamilton, fleshing out the rival brothers for the second time now, are good friends and frequent collaborators on and offstage, though

as Bullough and Arnold explain, that friendship will dissolve into accusations and pseudo-cuss words for a few hours every night.

"They fecking hate each other," Bullough says in an wry Irish accent as Arnold explains that the particular f-word he uttered is the Irish equivalent to f-ing, not the f-bomb.

Though *The Lonesome West* has them at odds with each other, the boys have more than enough experience to forgive, forget and go grab a pint after the show. It's their closeness that had Arnold wanting to get them in the play together in the first place.

"Colin and James have a kind of brotherly relationship: they're really good buddies, they've played in a lot of plays together, and that's part of the reason I asked them to do it," Arnold says. "They already have that kind of chemistry. They have their little fights, but they're somehow able to forgive each other."

Arnold so wanted that chemistry in the show, in fact, he wasn't above a little wool-pulling to ensure the pair would get involved.

"They both said 'yes' because the other was doing it," Arnold says with a smile. "Colin said, 'Is James doing it? Because if James is doing it, I'll do it.' I hadn't actually gotten the okay from James then, but I said, 'Oh, yeah.'"

He laughs. "It was just the same the other way, too." ▾

Just outside the frame, Gillian Willians is *Hiding in Plain Sight*

MARY LINDA O'KEEFE / marylinda@vancouver.com

Here is a road, wide and empty, a swath of grey asphalt flanking the green lawns of a pleasant neighbourhood. And a modest house—not a modern monstrosity of excess, but a quaint dwelling flanked by trees to mark the seasons. Inside, the middle-class comforts of rooms clothed in the lexicon of familial closeness: an armchair at the elbow of a generously stuffed sofa, a dark wood dining room set for holidays and guests, a jumble of mismatched chairs pulled around an informal table. People gathered in these places to eat, talk and live.

Those people are absent now, and Gillian Willians' domain is still, but not peaceful. The artist's MFA Painting grad show, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, is almost a complex, intimate film reinterpreted as an installation, an assemblage of drawn, painted and printed frames



scenes could bring connection and resolution. Her imprecise repetition reflects the added data of experience, the way memories entangled with places of lifelong familiarity jumble in our minds and compete to advance a narrative of our families as we age and grow into our assigned roles. It's a consequence of cognitive process: we add layers as we recall events based on where we are in the present.

WILLIAMS' ROLE in her family is clear in the unblinking bareness of *Hiding in Plain Sight*, and through the protective tenderness of her acts of omission: she's a camera, charged with recording and safeguarding the collective memory of her household.

What do we inflict on children of ours who, through accident of nature and nurture, take on interpreting adult dramas through the lenses of child minds? Willians bears the weight of being the repository for the familial story without the benefit of full disclosure. She hovers wide-eyed in the aftermath of interactions, puzzling out relationships and partial truths implied by the arrangements of vacant chairs and other shared spaces.

These intersections are not sinister or even necessarily negative. Willians

traces sites of recollection with a solemn regard for beauty and a palpable hope for universality. Underpinning the work is an existential

reverence, an acknowledgement of future loss as well as lost moments, simultaneously bereft and thankful To present remembrances so

nakedly, yet with the disappearance of dramatis personae, save for a lone sofa-borne dreamer, is to invite viewers to be moved by places and things that are their tangible signifiers of the bonds that forge our singular selves and knot us into families, communities, and makeshift tribes where we instinctively recreate what we lost.

The dreamer has turned away from the present. Willians is protector of the whole of the familial narrative, perhaps not only the past but a shared dream of the future too.

The final frame is an echo of a smaller, easily-overlooked piece encountered early in the show, the only one suggesting a private interior self apart from the collective. We look down at a bathroom sink, over which there must be a mirror, just out of view. Hands wiped clean, Willians is ready to reveal herself—or at least her reflection. ▽

PREVIEW
HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT
GILLIAN WILLIAMS MFA PAINTING GRAD SHOW
JUNE 10 - JUNE 12, 2008
JUN 10 - 12 PM

with repeating images, tableaux in strangely ordered groupings flickering with shadows of meaning.

A figure occupies one recurring scene in a handful of the 82 works in the show, perhaps male, but gender is ambiguous—someone is stretched out on a couch, face down. The body proportion suggests a grownup, most likely not old, but anywhere between mid-teen and middle age.

The question of age hangs over the observer, too: these images have the distinct tilt of memory, but are too suffused with twisting emotion to be caught in the amber of nostalgia—there isn't desire so much as a compulsion for articulation of some deeply felt essential truth. Willians' images are repeated in a kind of visual echolalia, intense and urgent, as if invoking sites of vanished domestic

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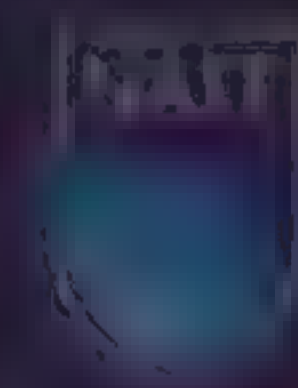
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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Journalist Ted Ferguson goes from city life to the *Back Roads* of Alberta

'Alberta is a goldmine—there are so many books that need to be written," says author/journalist **Ted Ferguson** over the telephone from Toronto. "There's such a long history of dreamers and schemers and misfits I think Alberta's a really fertile ground for writers, novelists and non-fiction writers all."

In Ferguson's latest book, *Back Roads*, he claims some of this fertile ground, both literally and figuratively.

The book charts something of an archetypal path: a Vancouver-based journalist flees the metropolis's workaholic lifestyle to become a modern-day pioneer in the backwoods of Alberta. Progressively developing panic attacks, a fear of heights, failing health and a profound sense of disconnection from his family, Ferguson realized that his urban rat-race lifestyle cannot continue. On a lark, he bought a quarter-section of land in northern Alberta for \$2500 and moved there with his wife and son shortly afterwards.

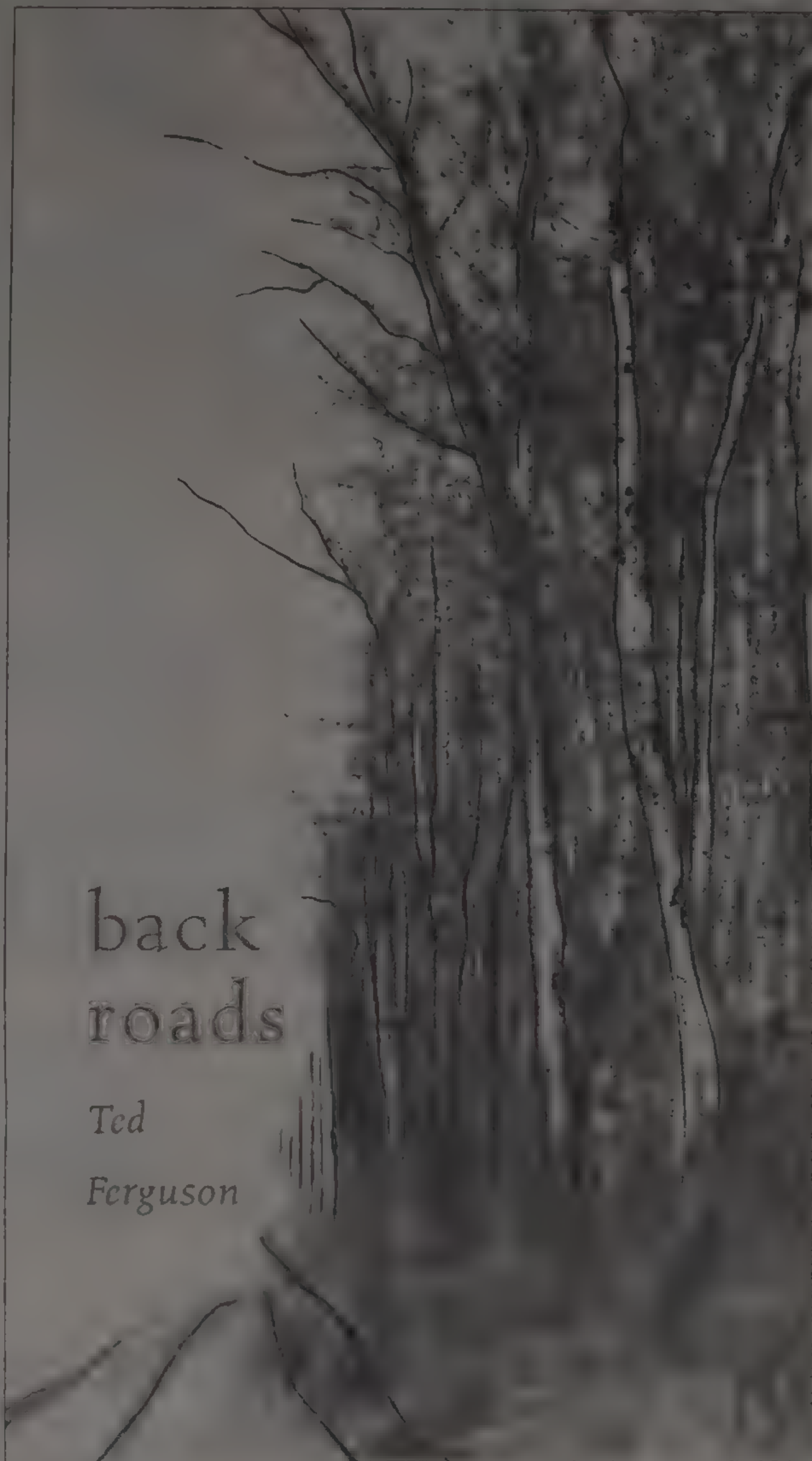
"There's a big sense of individualism ... a lot of interesting people come [to Alberta]," says Ferguson about Alberta's appeals. "I always sense that you can do what you want to do in Alberta. In Toronto [where Ferguson now lives] most of the things have already been done. I'm probably totally wrong, but that's what I've always felt."

Whereas this notion of Alberta—which Ferguson will explore further as part of his "A Literary Alberta" talk this Sun, Mar 16 at the Stanley Milner Library—as an enduring "wild west" where the eager and determined can succeed through hard work may strike some native Albertans as a rather blunt stereotype, as the structuring device in *Back Roads*, it permits the depiction of a man coming to "peace with himself."

FERGUSON WON'T SAY where exactly he spent his 12 years in rural Alberta during the 1980s, though the handful of locals that Ferguson did befriend feature prominently. His father-in-law blends effortlessly into the do-it-yourself machismo of a rural culture filled with trucks and machinery, livestock, construction, and general roughin' in the woods. Judith is an ageing rural elitist married to her social opposite, Frank. Greg, Tina and Susan form a rapidly breeding ménage-a-trois.

The rest of the narrative is the stuff of pioneering cliché—finding a house that's suitable (and suitably unique—no pre-fab, cookie-cutter dwelling for Ferguson), attempting to (and then giving up on) digging a well by himself, getting goats, his car breaking down in the middle of a blizzard and his having to walk through the snow home.

So while *Back Roads* is a glimpse into the lives of Ferguson, his family and his friends, it's not an ethnographic survey of the lives of rural



back roads

Ted
Ferguson

BOOKS

SUN, MAR 16 (1:30 PM)
A LITERARY ALBERTA
TALK BY TED FERGUSON
STANLEY MILNER LIBRARY (7 CHURCHILL SQ)
BACK ROADS
BY TED FERGUSON
216 PP, \$22.95

Albertans at all. Rather, it's emphatically a narrative about Ferguson's internal processes: a city man with a workaholic mentality coming up against nature.

This, of course, raises the question of what is a "true" rural experience? What is the countryside in (literary) imagination?

"The countryside is the opposite of the rat race," says Ferguson. "Myself, I've never had that much burning ambition; I'd rather have experiences, vast experiences, versus someone who just got a job out of high school. Not to criticize that, it's just appalling to me."

"[The rural experience] boiled down to time with my family, taking long walks, gaining some of the serenity that I didn't get elsewhere," Ferguson continues. "That's the marvelous thing about the countryside, you don't have to seek it, it just comes to you if you wait long enough. Living in the pure air, walking all the time, it's hard to explain."

Despite the fact that Ferguson left his cabin in Northern Alberta over a decade ago, following his son to Toronto, he says that his experience of roughin' it in the bush was formative.

"I've continued to walk for two hours a day, my health is wonderful—though of course if I say that I'll wake up with a pain tomorrow and that'll be the end of me," he jokes. "Since I did the Alberta thing, I don't work more than four to six hours a day. I meet a lot of people who are workaholics, but I'm completely cut off from that lifestyle now. Alberta gave me a portable happiness." ▼

Americans offer historical fiction of a different stripe

BOOKS

HOPSCOTCH

JOSEF BRAUN
hopscoatch@vancouverweekly.com

Books time travel with a freedom and ease not granted to other mediums. Not having to physically show us the past, save what it plucks from its imaginary landscape to evoke in our minds, the novel need not concern itself with tracking down a dozen Model Ts or 3000 extras in togas to convince its audience that we're in another time. The novel conveys the past with such immediacy because it does so through the consciousness of individual characters—though this is perhaps the greatest challenge posed to any artist. The new year has thus far deposited two striking new American novels into my hands that transport us to another time, one from a long-established master, one from a formidable emerging writer making a hell of an impression with his second work. Both concern distinctive moments in the 20th century and summon up scenes of iconic violence to punctuate intimate stories.

It's tough to know what exactly to make of Russell Banks's *The Reserve* (Knopf, \$32). Set in the 1930s, it begins with the first meeting between Vanessa Cole, a man-eating, mentally unstable heiress and divorcée, and Jordan Groves, a married-with-children painter and pilot known as much for his scarlet politics, Hemingwayesque travels and extramarital adventures as his painting. That these two might collide in some unruly erotic entanglement seems a no-brainer, but Banks has set a course for an altogether more sanguine melodrama, making the intermittent chapters alternately describing the flight of the crippled Hindenburg and an air strike on a Franco military stronghold more than mere historical context. There will be blood, indeed.

I've long admired Banks's work. In the case of *Affliction*, I was awestruck by the way in which Banks seemed to stake out some territory within the nightmare world of Jim Thompson—whose brilliantly chilling crime novels *The Killer Inside Me* and *Pop. 1280* set the mould for stories of small town lawmen with deep roots in their local communities and even deeper troubles in their fragile psyches—and making it all his own, bringing a certain expansion of character background, subjective psychological tension and finely detailed atmosphere than was typical of Thompson's concise, more genre-bound prose. Yet with *The Reserve*, which is also set in an isolated community, that of wealthy vacationers and poor townies in the Adirondacks, Banks is not just exploiting select elements of a thriller for literary ends. He's diving right in and just whipping up an unabashed thriller of his own.

There's an unmistakable trashiness to Vanessa and Jordan's tale of love, transgression, replete with an aiding and abetting of a local yokel named

Hubert St Germain, a guy who could have easily narrated any number of Thompson novels, a lonely widower who's sweetly natured but just too soft in the head to prevent catastrophe when presented with the opportunity. And there's a singular strangeness in reading something of this sort realized by the likes of Banks. The result is, as you might expect, a bit uneven, but once you get an idea of what you're in for, *The Reserve* does offer its share of salty thrills and moments of elegant, subtle, insightful imagery and emotional depth—and all in the same 287 page novel.

ZACHARY LAZAR'S *Sway* (Little, Brown, \$27.99) sweeps us forward into the 1960s and focusses from page one on the overtly sinister currents that ran through that decade that finally choked on its own rhetoric of peace and love. Its cast of characters will be familiar to anyone with an interest in the popular culture of the period: Brian Jones, founding member and first casualty of the Rolling Stones, Kenneth Anger, the occultist and underground filmmaker behind "Scorpio Rising" and "Invocation of My Demon Brother," and Bobby Beausoleil, the would-be rock star who featured prominently in "Demon Brother," became a member of Charles Manson's "family," and was convicted in 1970 for the murder of Gary Hinman. How these three connect, in the flesh and otherwise, seems in its own way the manifestation of some occult geometry, but what's at the base of each individual story is some magnetic attraction to the mystery and power of darkness.

The very first scene in *Sway* is loaded with a potent air of hazy menace, with Beausoleil taking a quiet little ride with Charlie into town, where some anonymous middle class residence waits to be penetrated in the middle of the night. Then, in a scene that then takes us through a tour of cold water flats in London where skinny English boys try to channel a certain demonic spirit out of their guitars and, soon after, to a blur of nightclubs where these same boys discover that this spirit can make girls go crazy and boys charge the stage. They're playing music from America, and that music contains a key to intoxicating violence.

Finally, Lazar chronicles Anger's cultivation of his long, arduous career in the international fringe, his films forging alliances with Jean Cocteau and later on Mick Jagger, who gradually usurps Jones as the guiding hand of the Stones. And Lazar writes a haunting, if decidedly unsentimental elegy to Jones as he shrinks away from stage and studio, from his weirdly symbiotic relationship with Anita Pallenberg—who winds up in the arms of the rather fun, amiably portrayed Keith Richards—and finally into that swimming pool. Jones's unexplainable death at the age of 27 is just one of many sour notes that brought that revolutionary decade to a morbid, exhausted close—and brings *Sway* to its fascinatingly shadowy conclusion. ▼

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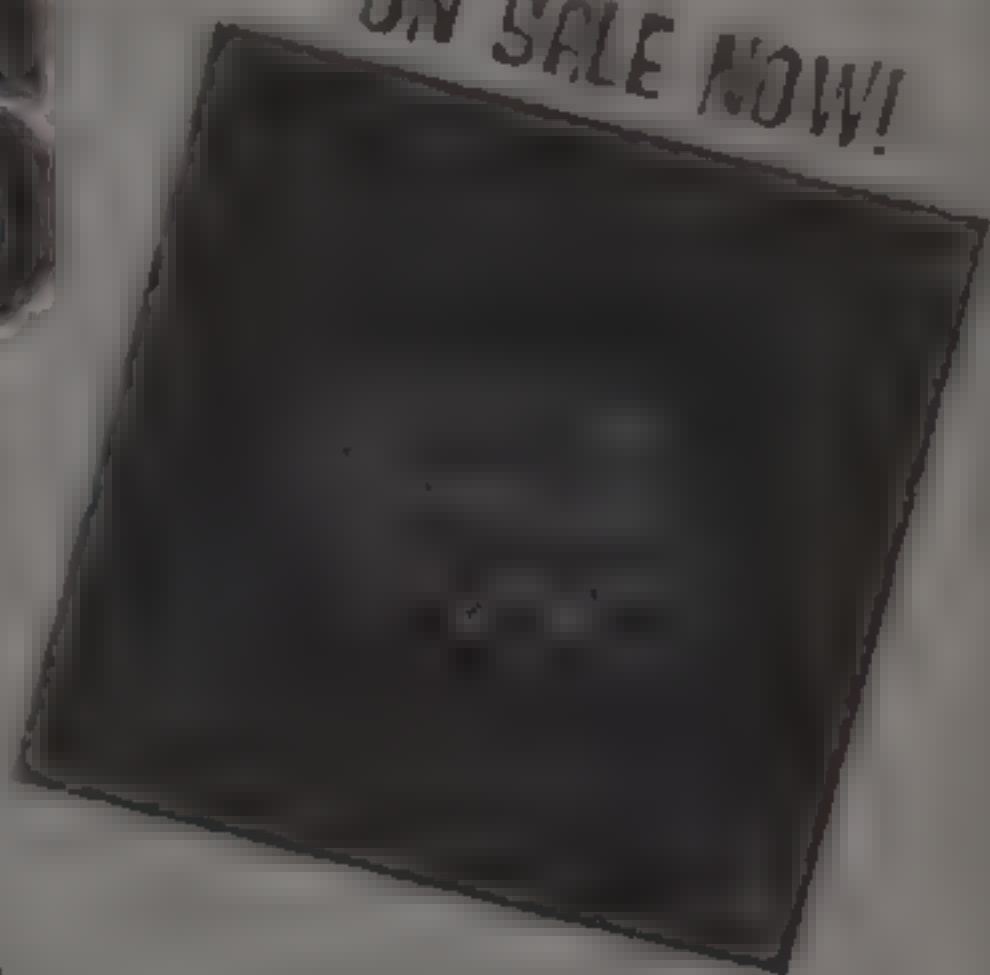
FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 13, 2008

1. Black Mountain - In The Future (scratch records)
2. kd lang - Watershed (ironesuch)
3. Vampire Weekend - S/T (w)
4. Radiohead - In Rainbows (tbd records)
5. Robert Plant & Alison Krauss - Rising Sound (rounder)
6. Iron & Wine - The Shepherd's Dog (sub pop)
7. Nada Surf - Lucky (barsuk)
8. Levon Helm - Dirt Farmer (vanguard)
9. Hayden - In Field & Town (hardwood)
10. Matt Costa - Unfamiliar Faces (brush fire)
11. Corb Lund - Horse Soldier! Horse Soldier! (story plain)
12. Drive By Truckers - Brighter Than Creation's Dark (new west)
13. O.S.T. - I'm Not There (columbia)
14. O.S.T. - Juno (rhino)
15. Cedence Wilson - After Party Begins (upper class)
16. Jim White - Transnormal Superdoo (the bop)
17. Sam Baker - Pretty World (sam baker)
18. Jose Gonzalez - In Our Nature (imperial)
19. Hawkstraw Workman - Between The Sheets (universal)
20. Samantha Schultz - Both Sides (samantha schultz)
21. The Sadies - New Seasons (outside)
22. The Dirtbombs - We Have You Surrounded (in the red)
23. Cat Power - Jukebox (matador)
24. Genghis Tron - Board Up The House (relapse)
25. The Loved Ones - Build And Burn (fat)
26. Dalt Punk - Alive 2007 (virgin)
27. The Weakeners - Reunion Tour (anti)
28. Chip Taylor & Carol Rodriquez - Live From The Bluebird Cafe (bluebird)
29. Franzl und Greyt - 2012: Zwanzig Zwölf (metropole)
30. Ray Bonneville - Gold By Feel (red house)

MADCAPS KISS THE LION

Entitled Kiss The Lion, the third album from the Madcaps is co-produced by the esteemed Glen Robinson (Xavier Caféine, The Tea Party, Voivod, Grim Skunk) and the leader of the group, Frédéric Pellerin (Caiman Fu, Madcaps). Though marked by the characteristic and unique rhythmic approach of the Madcaps, the energy of this latest opus is decisively more rock than its predecessors.

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Vlaskalic and Graham Drowning in love

DAVID BERRY / david@voeweekly.com

The detectives at Scotland Yard purportedly spent most of their time trying to figure out how he did it, but in the case of George Joseph Smith—the “Brides in the Bath” murderer, who married and drowned three consecutive women in the 1910s—there’s a riddle much more puzzling than figuring out how someone manages to drown three women with no signs of struggle: how does someone manage to convince three women to marry him, empty their savings and draw up a will in his name mere days after meeting him without a single one of them getting the slightest bit suspicious?

It was the latter question, at least, that first intrigued Daniela Vlaskalic and Beth Graham when they came across the case, which they used as the basis for *The Drowning Girls*, the Fringe hit that they’re getting set to remount at the Catalyst. Taking place in three bathtubs—this new version expands the story to all three brides, whereas the Fringe version only featured two—each woman gets a chance to tell her own story of meeting Smith, and explaining exactly how it was they got swept up so easily.

“I was really curious as to how these women could be so easily duped; how could they not see through how obvious he was?” Vlaskalic asks over the phone from Toronto, where she’s currently in rehearsals at Stratford (her place is being taken in this new production by Vanessa Sabourin). “All these things he did: taking out their money, getting them to draw up their wills—you just wonder how they didn’t see it.”

AS VLASKALIC AND GRAHAM realize, at least part of the reason is explainable by the time: this was,



obviously, a very different time for women, and the fact all three were getting dangerously close to old maid status no doubt helped Smith’s cause.

“For these women at the time, being an old maid was basically being thought of as superfluous, of not really mattering unless you had a husband,” explains Graham, who was in Calgary when we talked, starring in the play for the PlayWrites festival. “In a lot of ways that made them ripe for the pickings for George.”

PREVIEW
THU, MAR 13 - SUN, MAR 23 (8 PM)
THE DROWNING GIRLS
DIRECTED BY CHRYSTIE TOLIN
WRITTEN BY BETH GRAHAM, DANIELA VLASKALIC
COMEDY
STARRING GRAHAM, VANESSA SABOURIN,
VANESSA SABOURIN
CATALYST THEATRE (8529 GATEWAY BV), \$15/\$18

“It became more about society, and women in society at the time: really their only way to find some power in life was to get married,” agrees Vlaskalic. “Being married meant everything then, and we really began

to understand their mental state: it’s really not so cut-and-dry.”

Of course, though social mores at the time contributed, both Vlaskalic and Graham also point out that there’s also a lot of truth to the old adage that love is blind. Though obviously neither has found themselves in quite the same position as the brides in the bath, certainly everyone has overlooked something fairly crucial.

“We did ask each other how this could have happened, but then we kind of realized: you know, how many relationships we’ve all had where, after the fact, it’s just like, ‘Why didn’t I see that?’” explains Graham. “And that’s really what it’s kind of about: it’s a bit of a cautionary tale for people who are thinking of falling in love or who are in love: love is blind.”

“We often don’t see the foibles and the flaws of the people we love for whatever reason,” Vlaskalic admits. “It’s a bit of a mystery, but it serves a purpose, in a way: if you could only see the faults of people, you might never love anyone. It’s the nature of love: it’s blind, and it has to be.”

December Man offers simple sympathy

DAVID BERRY / david@voeweekly.com

There is a profound kind of sympathy in Colleen Brown’s *December Man*, a suggestion that there is no such thing as an isolated tragedy, a revelation that the psychic wounds of an event stretch further and reach deeper than we like to pretend. There’s a bitter irony when, in the play’s final scene (though first chronologically in the backwards-moving plot), a shaken mother tries to comfort her son after he returns unharmed from the École Polytechnique Massacre and assures him that everything will be okay: the bullets of Marc Lépine, Brown suggests, were heard and felt far beyond the walls of the school.

The play opens with that mother Kathleen (Nicola Lipman), and her husband Benoit (Brian Dooley) dressed in their Sunday finest, sitting placidly on their couch while they wait for carbon monoxide to fill the room. As we learn as the play regresses through the last two years of their life, they’re distraught over the

REVUE
THU, MAR 13 - SUN, MAR 23 (8 PM)
DECEMBER MAN
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL FRYMAN
WRITTEN BY COLLEEN BROWN
STARRING BRIAN DOOLEY, JEFF IRVING,
NICOLA LIPMAN
CITADEL THEATRE (9828 - 101A AVE), \$43 - \$53

suicide of their son Jean (Jeff Irving), a bright, sensitive young man utterly destroyed by being a bystander at the École Polytechnique Massacre. Dooley call the play a black comedy, but I just don’t see it: there are humorous bits, sure, but they don’t come from the tragedy of the situation so much as the uncomfortable, sometimes awkward—and as a result, achingly real—bonds between the simple family *December Man* follows. Not that the lack of black comedy is any kind of hindrance: it works beautifully as an exploration of the lower middle class, a group that lacks the resources, mental or monetary, to deal with a tragedy that affects them so personally.

THESE ARE PEOPLE who can’t escape a bad situation, never deal with it: they try religion, alcohol, even karate, only to find their demons still waiting for them the instant they’ve got off their knees, sobered up or left the dojo. A Jean increasingly seeps into despair, his parents are increasingly unable to help him, offering heartfelt but hopeless inadequate sympathy that frequently returns to one simple truth: you’ve got to put it behind you. Exactly how it never exactly revealed, though again escaping into something is the most frequent implication, not that it ever works.

The well-meaning confusion of Kathleen and Benoit is handled beautifully by Lipman and Dooley, each taking their turns at misguided and often misplaced emotions, frustrations and sympathies stewing together and occasionally boiling over into breakdowns. Irving is somewhat less successful, but the Citadel’s production is none the worse for it, the veteran pair of actors providing honest, flawed portrayals that let Brown’s script work.

Love has no *Half Life*

One of the big questions of life is what constitutes the essence of human existence. The romantic may say it's love. The devout might say it's the soul.

It's probably not a question we pose everyday, but it is certainly one that arises when major circumstance forces us to, like an injury, an illness or a death.

Playwright John Mighton's Governor General's Award-winning *Half Life* asks us what happens when memory—those little bits we look back on to inform us of who we are—makes missteps. In the clutches of an illness like Alzheimer's, is it possible to lead a full life? One with a sense of possibility? One with love?

Through Clara (Carolyn Hetherington), who suffers from Alzheimer's and who meets and falls in love with Patrick (Eric Peterson) while the pair are living in a nursing home, we are compelled to see memory as something ephemeral—but beautifully so.

"The character that I play is so happy and at ease with life," Hetherington says. "I think at that stage of the play, it's harder to find ones than it is on the patient."

Through the rest of the cast, we see that memory is as much of a cage as its loss. For example, Clara's son Donald (Richard Clarkin) is so wrapped up in his recollections of his parents' relationship—how his mother was devoted to his war-hero father—that he simply can't be happy that she has found love again. To Donald, Patrick is a pale shadow of what his father was.

Donald adores his mother. That's a given. I think that he very much wants to do the right thing. Also, there's an element of jealousy, you know? He's very protective of her. He has guardianship of her and he's an only child," Hetherington explains. "She has a line, where she



says, 'You know, you were so frightened the first day of school. You wouldn't let go of my leg.' And I think he never has."

Patrick's daughter Anna (Laura De Carteret), however, sees her father's love in a much more romantic light. Her testament is that her father has stopped hiding his memories in alcohol.

WHILE CLARA AND PATRICK tell each of their middle-aged children that they met briefly during the Second World War, there is question whether or not this is true. It's a question that Mighton leaves consciously unanswered. As Hetherington sees it, the answer is irrelevant.

"It doesn't matter because they love each other at this time in their life," she says. "[The play is] about

PREVIEW THU, MAR 13 - SUN, MAR 30 (7:30 PM)
HALF LIFE
DIRECTED BY DANIEL BROOKS
WRITTEN BY JOHN MIGHTON
STARRING CAROLYN HETHERINGTON,
ERIC PETERSON, RICHARD CLARKIN
CITADEL THEATRE, \$43 - \$69

memory loss—loss as well as the loss of memory. Love. Tenderness. Desire—that it is still possible. It's uplifting, it's moving, it's humorous.

"I don't think that it's a sad play," she continues. "But it's one that everyone in the audience seems to be able to connect to in some way. And hopefully they leave without being too saddened by it, but more uplifted. Because, how wonderful to be able to get to that stage and love the way that these two can." ▼

Coming together for *Three Viewings*

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vnewweekly.com

'A funeral is never about the person who died. It's about the people who are still alive: either remembering [them], or continuing on. It's a weird sort of social event," says Wayne Paquette, co-director and stage manager for Shadow Theatre's *Three Viewings*.

Paquette himself directs one of the script's three monologues; the other two are juggled by Shadow Theatre's artistic director John Hudson, marking the second time this season that the company's used multiple directors for a show.

"John and I had this great love of this play and what we wanted to bring to it, and it just came up that my interest in it was so strong, John said 'there's three separate monologues. Why don't you tackle one?'"

"And you got [to direct] me," quips actor/sound designer Dave Clarke. "Did you draw straws?"

They laugh along with fellow cast-member Patricia Bell-Casey, sitting in the back of the Varscona. Clarke and Bell-Casey, along with the absent Davina Stewart, will present the show's trilogy of scenes. Each takes place in the same funeral parlour in a small Ohio town—"We even think we know exactly what town it is, although in the play it's never identified," Bell-Casey hints—and has each actor speaking directly to the assembled audience.

"The playwright instructs the actor that this is storytelling to audience. There's not some contrived device: sometimes you get a voice that comes over and asks the questions, or it's supposedly a stream of consciousness thing," Bell-Casey explains. "This is 'here's my story.' There's no way for the audience—unless we're really bad—[to] disengage. That's magical;



PREVIEW THU, MAR 13 - SUN, MAR 30 (8 PM)
THREE VIEWINGS
DIRECTED BY WAYNE PAQUETTE, JOHN HUDSON
WRITTEN BY JEFFREY HATCHER
STARRING DAVE CLARKE, DAVINA STEWART,
PATRICIA BELL-CASEY
VARSCONA THEATRE (10329 - 83 AVE), \$16 - \$22

that's the essence of theatre. You've got an actor talking to an audience. Everything else is peripheral—even sound, Dave, I'm afraid."

GIVEN HOW TIGHTLY knit the cast appear, it's a little disappointing that their paths won't cross during the production. But the sequencing of the monologues let them all develop their mutual universe together; people mentioned in one scene are sure to pop up again in another.

"I think it'll be the kind of show where elbows get thrown," Bell-Casey says. "Oh! I remember her."

"My piece is first, and it sets up a hell of a lot of stuff," Clarke adds. "In that way, you feel like you're part of the same play universe, but I'm sure the experience is different [for everyone]."

He pauses.

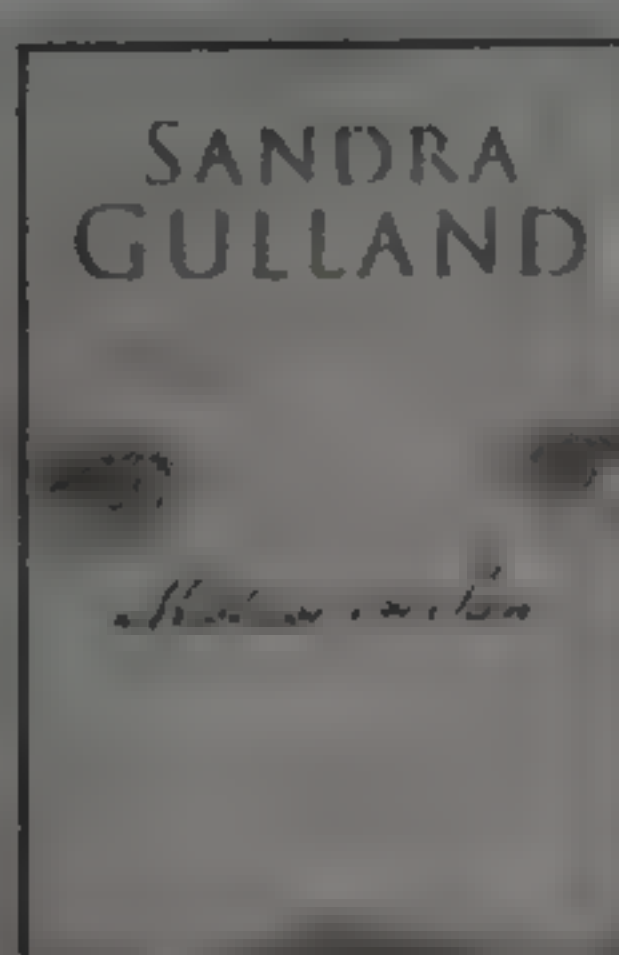
"And we'll be high-fiving each other as we pass off stage." ▼

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Haneke plays some *Funny Games*, but they won't move you

JOSIEF BRAUN / josef@vueweekly.com

Peter and Paul, the young antagonists in *Funny Games*, Aryan, clad in stark white, exuding a sort of robotic idea of politeness, spread through the isolated world of the film like some infectious disease. These boys move from one country house, one family, to another, each time exacting a basically identical program of horrifically violent disaster. They penetrate the home through feigning innocence and asking an innocuous favour, then disarm the resident patriarch and engage the entire clan in a game of terror whose rules are childishly simple yet hopelessly fixed in the assailants' favour. Watching their campaign unfold is like bearing witness to a nightmare of such deadening inevitability as to be, above all, wearying.

For those following the work of Austrian filmmaker Michael Haneke, watching *Funny Games* will also provoke considerable déjà vu. Haneke's not only remaking his own 1997 Austrian film of the same name, but delivering a shot-by-shot duplication: the story, characters, even the lighting, props and layout of the house have been lovingly recreated, only this time in English and with English-language actors. The duplication's so precise that while watching the new film the viewer can't help but become distracted by the most incidental shift in detail (Hey, there's soy milk in the fridge!).

With regard to the performances, it's



HORROR

OPENS FRI, MAR 14

FUNNY GAMES

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MICHAEL HANEKE

STARRING NAOMI WATTS, TIM ROTH,

MICHAEL PITT

★★★

hard to gauge what's largely a matter of linguistic familiarity. Peter and Paul, here played by Brady Corbet and Michael Pitt, do seem slightly more textured. Their victims, Ann, George and Georgie, likewise have one or two moments that caught me off guard. Executive producer Naomi Watts, who seems to possess a special interest in horror remakes (see *The Ring*, *The Ring 2*, *King Kong* and, coming soon, *The Birds*) is certainly committed, while

Tim Roth, in a role previously played by the late Ulrich Mühe, creates what for me is by far the film's most affecting moment, the scene in which George, suffering unimaginable shock, barely able to stand, asks his wife to forgive him for not being able to somehow prevent the catastrophe that's beset their family. Overall, however, both versions prompted exactly the same response in me: intrigue, followed by a period of extreme anxiety and repulsion, followed by utter, exasperating boredom, and, once the film was through, a degree of grudging intellectual appreciation.

THE OSTENSIBLE POINT of *Funny Games* is to function as a critique of the modification of violence through

numerous, highly calculated attempts at subverting audience expectations. We might expect to see exciting, dynamic violence; we might expect suspense; we might expect to see the antagonists undone by some mixture of ingenuity on the part of their adversaries and unpredictable forces from the world beyond this house under siege. Haneke denies us these things. The problem is that what he's put in their place are alienation techniques you might expect from some annoyingly smarty-pants film student, such as having the antagonists condescendingly talk directly to the camera or pick up a remote control and rewind back a few minutes so they can correct events in a way that suits them better. There are simply no real rules to *Funny*

Games, a fact which no doubt upsets our bourgeois notions of cathartic drama, but nonetheless does little to implicate us any further in what's unfolding, because to implicate us we'd need to care a lot more.

I greatly admire the films Haneke's made since the first *Funny Games*. *Code Unknown*, *The Piano Teacher*, *Time of the Wolf* and *Caché* all succeed where *Funny Games* fails: they make a deeply troubling spectacle of violence and withhold information as a way to coerce our active participation with the narrative and the layers of significance inherent in it. In his Cineaste review, Richard Porton suggests that *Funny Games* "is best addressed not in terms of whether it actually works on screen, but as an object that spews out ideas."

I suppose you do need to actually see *Funny Games* to be able to appreciate what it has to offer. But do you need to see it in two languages? Do you even need to see it twice? And furthermore, does a violent film need to be so loftily schematic to engage us in questioning how we consume and/or become disaffected by violence? If viewers are required to be self-reflexive anyway, could they not be just as provoked by a smart genre film, say one by Hitchcock, Verhoven or Cronenberg, that's infused with ideas, auto-critiques and still delivers the goods with regards to emotional investment in story and characters? ▼

Films continue to fail to look deep into the heart of Africa

FLICKS

DVDETECTIVE

JOSIEF BRAUN & BRIAN GIBSON
osie@vueweekly.com

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vueweekly.com

Africa We still talk about it like one big country, a monolithic, monochromatic place. And cinema isn't helping—few films reflecting the richly diverse, complex 53 nations (and about 2000 languages) in the continent are reaching us. Even the *Without the King* director Ousmane Sembène's final film, *Moolaadé*, was something of a sop to well-meaning Westerners in its slanted story.

Now, between a homegrown epic that projects a Western-convenient picture and a documentary that lets the West off the hook, only showing irresponsibility within, the hope at the end of two DVD releases seems more fake and harmful than the glossy picture of a rosy savannah sunset in a safari brochure.

The Yacoubian Building, adapted from Adaa el-Aswany's bestselling novel by director Marawan Hamed and screenwriter Wahid Hamed, presents an easy-to-under-

stand Africa that fits into simple preconceptions. A soapy drama centred on a storied art-deco residence in Cairo, the movie moves from labourers in small, makeshift shelters on the rooftop down to lazing, rich businessmen in their lavish apartments.

The two-and-a-half-hours-plus goes sleekly, but the operatic flourishes and stratosphere-soaring score threaten to suck all realism out of the movie's social strata cross-section. A sense of Egypt's ingrained class system (almost a caste system) comes across, though simplistically. People hide behind masks of respectability, while betrayals and power grabs lurk in a skin-deep democracy—under-the-table deals and insider corruption truly reign.

That picture of Egypt, though, combines with a steady assault on Islam and a deeply retrograde homophobia to offer a handy Western guide to the country. Leer-ing patriarchs get their way thanks to convenient interpretations of the Koran, but when the zealous imam starts preaching about Egypt becoming a religious state and the searching young man hits the desert for terrorist training camp, we're well into thinly veiled anti-Islam territory. Islam is only cast as anti-democratic.

Only homosexuality is worse, painted as a decadent, duplicitous, unholy (and probably foreign) sin that not only indirectly kills a child, but leads to thievery and creates a murderer. Given the panoply of native, pre-colonial sexualities across the continent that are increasingly not being spoken about thanks to bigoted leaders and a simplistic, Western notion of sexuality and gay rights, the storyline here is even more crooked. *The Yacoubian Building* slums around in the basement when it could have shown some messy, lived-in corners of a down-to-earth, honest-to-god African nation.

MICHAEL SKOLNIK'S *Without the King* presents the leader of Swaziland, a small landlocked country nestled between South Africa and Mozambique that's the continent's only absolute monarchy (other spikes on that crown include Brunei, Vatican City and Liechtenstein). As an 18-year-old son succeeding his father to the polygamous position of supreme ruler, King Mswati III came to power in 1986.

Skolnik has easy access to the royal family, particularly the eldest daughter. Princess Sikhanyiso prefers to be known

as Pashu, fancies herself a rapper and generally acts and talks like a cool, middle-class London teenager. Her personal story—Pashu leaves for California to study in a Catholic college—takes up too much time, though, when the film could focus more sharply and affectingly on the gulf between the King and his subjects.

Shots of a fleet of luxury cars and ornate palace rooms contrast bitterly with the sight of people walking about Gamula Township to their shacks, forced to rely on stagnant water and World Food Programme handouts. The King has seven royal residences and a large stake in the country's real estate, sugar and media industries; his worth is in the billions. But most Swazis are living on less than 63 cents a day and a staggering 40 per cent have HIV or AIDS.

The King uses amiable, empty rhetoric, meaninglessly rolling out the word "people" like Bush flies the banner-term "freedom." But just how many of the "people" oppose the King? Has the grip of poverty and AIDS throttled the relatively luxurious will to rise up, in a land that seems a little like pre-Revolution France?

Without the King also doesn't explain the monarchy's debt to its British colonial

legacy or to African traditions. Some seem selectively chosen and confused with Catholic missionary ideas—by a leadership preoccupied with notions of being a pre-colonial land—as with the King's hypocritical celibacy campaign against AIDS while he was still picking virgins to be his wives. And Skolnik ignores the corroding influence and neglect of global capitalism in bed with repressive regimes—Coca-Cola has its concentrate plant in the country and contributes 40 per cent of Swaziland's GDP.

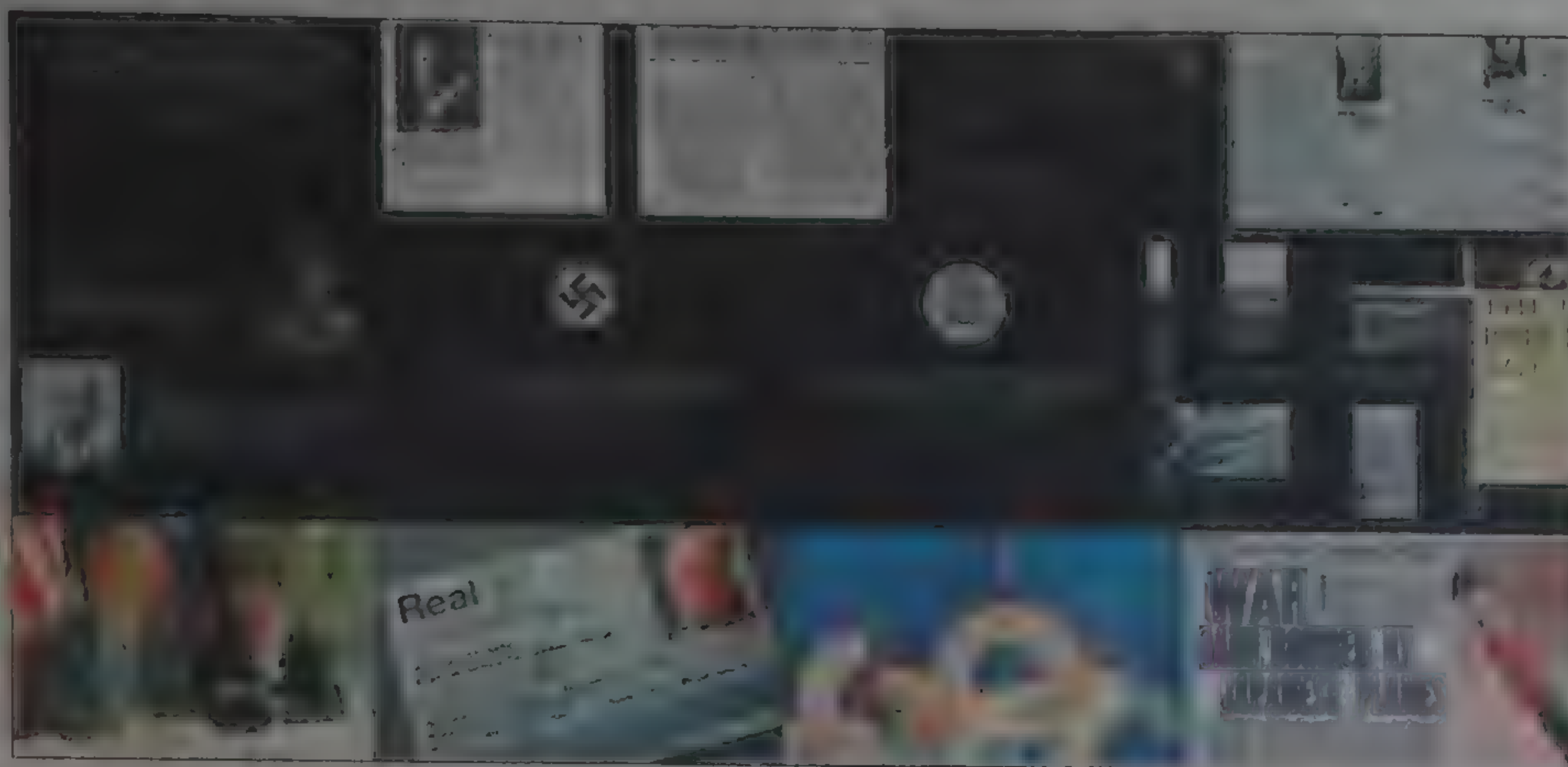
We don't need cooing, breathy vocals to be shaken by the tour of an AIDS orphanage, or forced to read subtitles when Swazis speak English. And the final scene, wrongly, is the Princess' vague talk of hope for the future after she goes to the orphanage, unjustly eclipsing the articulate, passionate criticisms from the many activists and opponents who hail from political groups that are banned, tracked, or rounded up.

When *Without the King* surveys that rocky, riven terrain where the groundwork for revolt is being laid, it intrigues, but like too many films from or about a dense, deep, far-from-dark continent, it doesn't explore far enough for the right questions, let alone answers. ▼

RECEIVED: 11/11/1971

Does any of this sound familiar? Sound a little kooky? For conspiracy buffs, these topics are hardly new, but for the six million or more people watching the online video *Zeitgeist*, these ideas must have some novelty. Rated the top-watched Google video for months, *Zeitgeist* is a slick mixed media presentation split into a tripartite of controversial claims (noted above), concluding that the global ruling elite are conspirators in controlling the masses—and you.

People seek to blame scapegoats—politicians, CEOs—rather than ourselves. Maybe we're just trying to make sense in a world where the political



DOCUMENTARY

SAT, MAR 15 (7 PM)
ZEITGEIST
 PRODUCED BY PETER JOSEPH
 STANLEY A MILNER LIBRARY (7 CHURCHILL SQ)
 BY DONATION

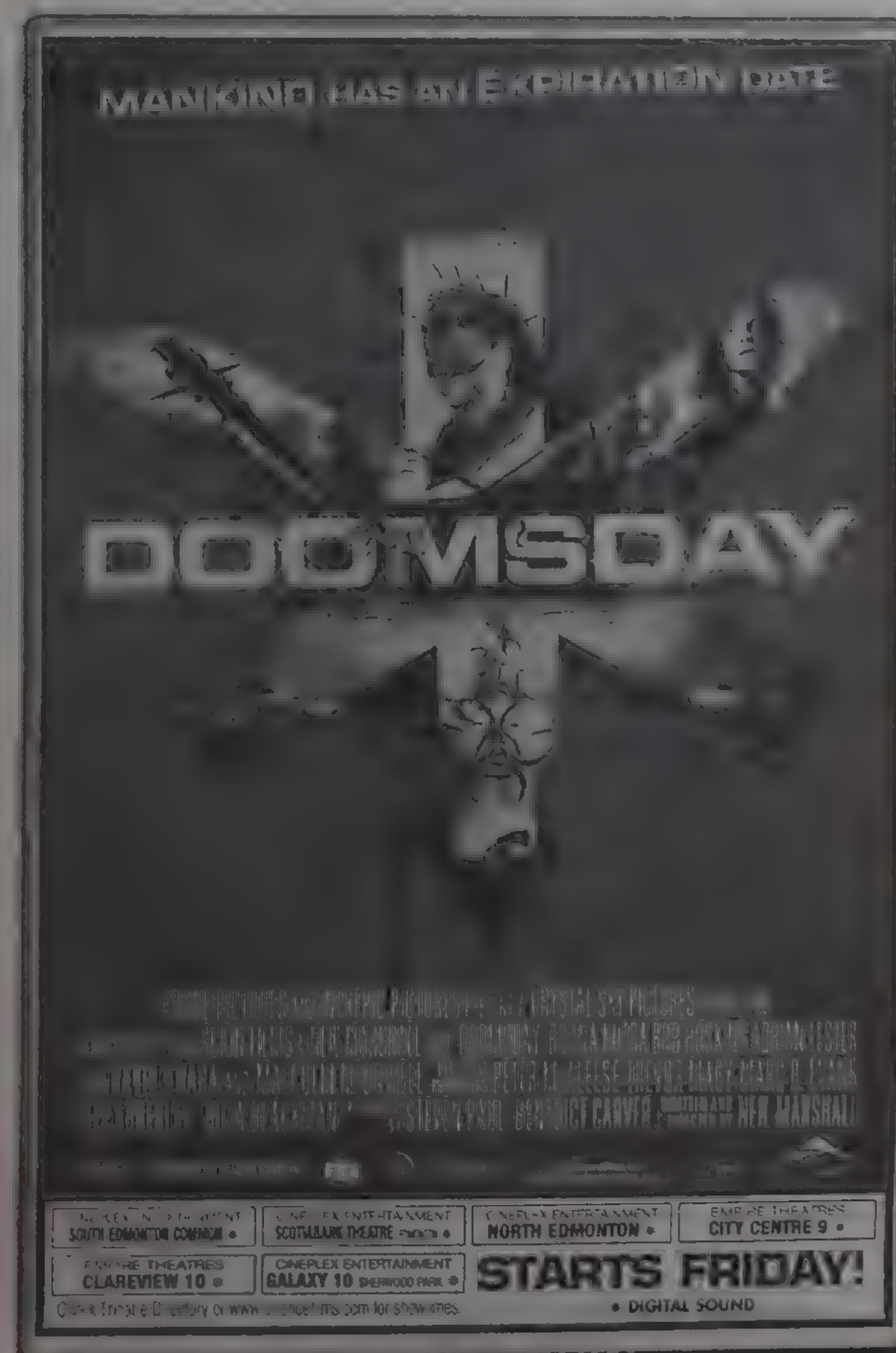
But it really depends on your own position in life, biases you may have already formed, and in this writer's opinion, how trusting you are to anyone or anything that has some kind of control in your life. From implanting ID microchips to the construction of a one-world government, *Zeitgeist* certainly evokes a sense of powerlessness. If the spirit of our time, which

BUT IS THE FILM propaganda or a well-researched think piece? One writer from realitiesandwich.com calls the film an "outlandish, grandiose, and paranoid take on reality," but admits "there are hefty kernels of truth rattling around throughout." Like the film *Loose Change: The Truth Behind 9/11*, *Zeitgeist* has spurred plenty of discussion online about the validity of its claims. Filmmaker Peter Joseph's hope is that "peo-

Want to be inspired? Marked as Z-Day, Mar 15 will feature worldwide screenings of *Zeitgeist*, with 688 public events and over 1000 private screenings registered on the film's website. It will provide a chance for people to come out and watch the film with the new agers and cynics, or at least encourage people to view it for free online, where they can wonder about life and *Zeitgeist's* claims all alone. **V**

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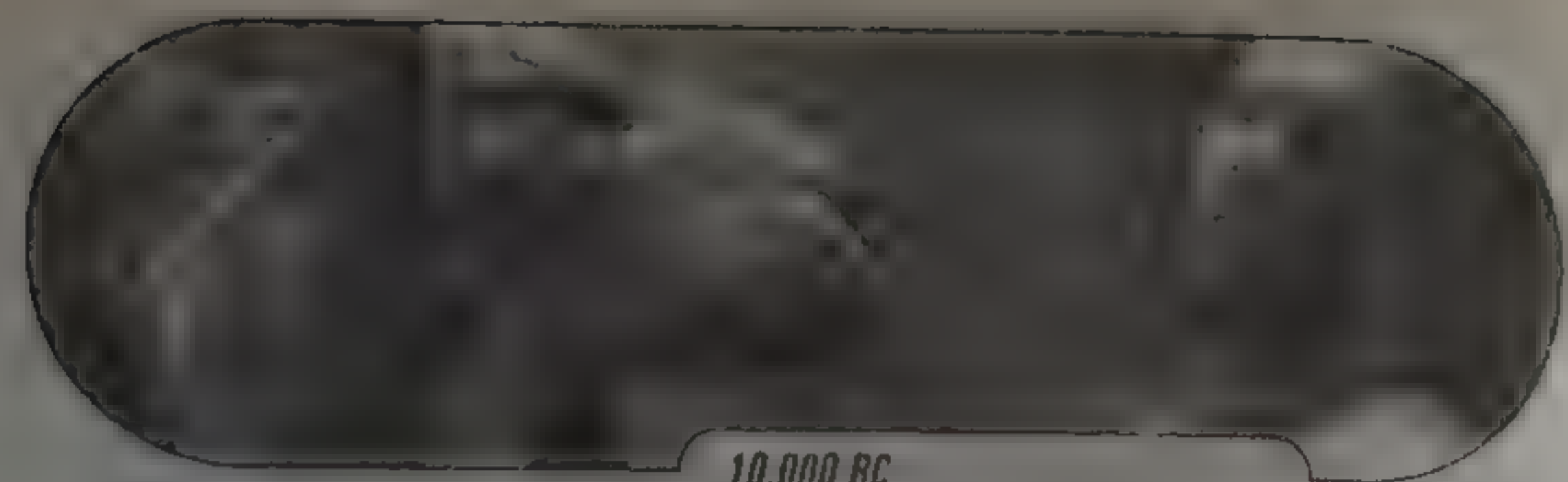
A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE
EASTERN PROMISES

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QUICK REVIEWS

FILM CAPSULES



10,000 BC



NEVER BACK DOWN

OPENING THIS WEEK

DAVID CRONENBERG RETROSPECTIVE
FEATURING A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE, EASTERN PROMISES
METRO CINEMA; SUN, MAR 16 (2 PM); \$10

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuweekly.com

The final pair of films screening this weekend in Metro Cinema's David Cronenberg mini-retrospective, his most recent, helped to restore the director's commercial viability. This could be attributed to what at first glimpse might seem like a deliberate shift toward less repulsive subject matter than is characteristic

of Cronenberg's films, and toward a more crowd-pleasing genre. To be sure, *A History of Violence* (2005) and *Eastern Promises* ('06) are both thrillers through and through, yet they're hardly routine exercises. They in fact constitute a thoughtful reconsideration and dynamic recontextualization of one of the most compelling themes running through the Cronenberg canon. We might call it the beast within.

Though ostensibly based on a pretty pedestrian graphic novel, *A History of Violence* reveals itself to be the product of a formidable noir lineage. Like the heroes of *The Killers* (1946), *Out of the Past* ('47) or *Act of Violence* ('48), to name just a few of the very best films in the original noir cycle, Tom Stall has invested in a respectable, quiet life in a quaint American town where no one knows what shadows lurk in his past. But, as was the case with his predecessors, the shadows find him anyway. Tom's own family comes to realize they don't know who he really is, that he's been playing a part for as long as they've known him. But the idea of role playing creeps into the film before Tom's violent impulses involuntarily announce themselves: we see Tom and his wife Edie, for instance, pretending to be teenagers as a method of sexual arousal. And though Tom's secret history is particularly characterized by brutal violence, the violence that re-enters his life forms a sort of chain reaction beyond his own actions: we see his son Jack transform from a passive victim of bullies to an aggressive combatant. As with so many Cronenberg films, it's proposed that the seed of transgression is planted somewhere within each of us. In this case it just happens to appear genetic in origin.

Eastern Promises immerses us into an

altogether different milieu: urban, gritty, multicultural and far more overtly dangerous, the London our protagonists inhabit is multifaceted and labyrinthine to the degree that entire, densely populated social orders can operate without drawing the attention of authorities or other outsiders. That is until Anna finds a diary that once belonged to the young female slave of the Russian mafia. And it's only much later in the story that the contents of this diary bring her into close contact with Nikolai, a chauffeur and tough-as-nails errand boy who also hides secrets though much of his biography is tattooed on his hardened body. For those who haven't yet seen the film, it's best to leave it at that.

Cronenberg's worked with numerous superb, like-minded actors throughout his career, yet none seem to have emerged so wholly from his own psyche as Viggo Mortensen, who stars in both of these films. As opposite as they first appear, Tom and Nikolai share a number of traits that make the actor playing them seem like the utter embodiment of Cronenberg's ideal male protagonist: they're equally capable with both their intellect and their bodies; they're duplicitous and betray any comfortable notion of a hero having a fixed identity; and, in scenes of bracing action, their dazzling responses to mortal threat convey an animalistic impulse waiting below the surface. Cronenberg and Mortensen have proven to be one of the great director-actor teams in movies. Here's hoping they find yet another dazzling variation under which to collaborate.

NEVER BACK DOWN

DIRECTED BY JEFF WADLOW

WRITTEN BY CHRIS HAUTY

STARRING SEAN FARIS, CAM GIGANDET,
AMBER HEARD, DJIMON HOUNSOU

★

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuweekly.com

Back in 1999, I used to follow the exploits of Dawson, Pacey, Joey and Jen as they moped their way through their teen years, all angst and artifice, each new week presenting a new life-changing crisis and an opportunity to learn some serious lessons about how to get through your adolescent years unscathed by your own overwhelming emotions. When I wasn't fantasizing about a freaky fourway with Joey, Jen and that other blonde girl—y'know, the one with the gay brother—I was watching *Fight Club*. Little did I know

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less than 10 years later, someone would smooch the two together for my viewing pleasure.

Well, pleasure is a strong word. *Never Back Down* is not the thrill ride it purports to be.

Basically, this "teen" named Jake Tyler (Sean Faris), who looks a lot like Tom Cruise and doesn't have any zits or vocal pitch problems, moves to Orlando because he fights too much. (Oh yeah, the family is a so trying to escape the memory of Jake's dad, who died after driving drunk.) When he gets there he meets this girl named Baja (Amber Heard) who likes him, or so he thinks. She invites him to his party because her boyfriend Ryan (Cam Gigandet) wants to fight him, because he has won the local Mixed Martial Arts competition, like, two years in a row, and since everyone saw Jake one-punch a guy on YouTube after that guy had poked fun at his dad's death, Ryan has to prove how tough he is.

But then we find out that Baja really did like Jake all along, that she didn't want to double cross him like that, but she had to because she would be nothing without Ryan. You see, she was a new kid once too—in fact, she and Jake aren't all that different. But Ryan took a shine to her and now she's "popular" and stuff, and in her old school she was a loser, so it's, like, totally complicated now. Oh yeah, and Jake's still hanging around eating burgers and saying things like "Brawlin'!"

Anyway, I bet you can imagine how it all works out (You mean he gets the girl and he wins the fight? Dude!). *Never Back Down* is even more homoerotic than real Mixed Martial Arts competitions, has way less cool sexy scenes than *Dawson's Creek*—even though the *Creek* was set in duck boot country Massachusetts while this movie is set in Orlando—and one can only hope the movie is a product of the writers' strike. The only cool part, and the reason it gets one star, is that it contains not one but two '80s-style montage sequences. Okay, so, *Dawson's Creek*, *Fight Club* and a little bit of *Karate Kid*.

NOW PLAYING

10,000 BC
 Directed by Roland Emmerich
 Starring: Vinnie Jones, Lenny Kravitz, Haggai Kluger
 Also starring: Steven Strait, Camilla Belle

OMAR MOUALLEM / omar@vuwweekly.com
Quest for Fire, one of the most ingenious Canadian films, was set 80,000 years ago, contained no woolly mammoths and had Anthony Burgess create an entire language for the tribes to speak. The sole plot of the film was the discovery, capture and transfer of fire. As a result of the film's strict adherence to authenticity, it is almost completely unwatchable. *10,000 BC*, on the other hand, is very watchable, requiring nothing but your eyes and your promise not to laugh out loud.

Legend has it that at the end of the Mesolithic age—in a region of the world where Africans, caucasians, Mongols and Indonesians lived hills apart—a blue-eyed girl was discovered by a multicultural, modern-English speaking tribe. The matriarchy believes the girl, Eolett, ominous, so a chivalrous mammoth hunter goes to secure the tribe's prosperity.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

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PENELOPE (PG)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:00, 6:50, 9:25; Sat 4:00, 6:50, 9:25

MEET THE SPARTANS (14A, crude content)
 Fri-Sat 2:05, 4:55, 7:35, 9:50, 11:55

UNTRACEABLE (18A, gory scenes, disturbing content)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 7:30, 10:00; Sat 7:30, 10:00, 12:20

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (G)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:35, 4:30, 7:00, 9:10; Sat 1:35, 4:30, 7:00, 9:10, 11:25

MAD MONEY (PG, coarse language)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:15, 4:10, 6:45, 9:15; Sat 1:15, 4:10, 6:45, 9:15, 11:30

CLOVERFIELD (14A, frightening scenes)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 2:00, 4:40, 7:10, 9:30; Sat 2:00, 4:40, 7:10, 9:30, 11:40

THE WATER HORSE: LEGEND OF THE DEEP (PG)
 Daily 1:50, 4:45

SWENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET (18A, gory scenes)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:25, 7:00, 9:45; Sat 1:40, 4:25, 7:00, 9:45, 12:15

P.S. I LOVE YOU (PG, coarse language)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:20, 4:05, 6:55, 9:35; Sat 1:20, 4:05, 6:55, 9:35, 12:10

I AM LEGEND (14A, frightening scenes)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:55, 4:50, 7:25, 9:55; Sat 1:55, 4:50, 7:25, 9:55, 12:05

THE GOLDEN COMPASS (PG, violence, not recommended for young children)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:15, 7:20, 9:50; Sat 1:30, 4:15, 7:20, 9:50, 12:15

ENCHANTED (G)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:45, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40; Sat 1:45, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40, 12:00

BEE MOVIE (G)
 Daily 1:10, 3:10, 5:05, 7:15

INTO THE WILD (14A)
 Daily 9:20

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

10000 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 No Passes Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 2:10, 3:20, 4:30, 5:30, 6:40, 8:00, 9:00, 10:10, Tue 12:00, 2:10, 3:20, 4:30, 5:30, 6:40, 8:00, 9:00, 10:10; Star and Strollers Screening: no passes Tue 12:00

DOOMSDAY (18A, brutal violence, gory scenes)
 Daily 1:30, 4:10, 7:45, 10:15

NEVER BACK DOWN (14A, violence)
 Daily 1:30, 4:10, 7:45, 10:15

COLLEGE ROAD TRIP (G)
 Daily 12:20, 2:30, 5:10, 7:15, 9:20

10,000 B.C. (PG, violence)
 Daily 1:10, 2:15, 3:40, 5:00, 6:30, 7:40, 9:15, 10:25

THE BANK JOB (14A, mature themes, nudity, violence)
 Daily 1:50, 5:15, 7:50, 10:30

SEMI-PRO (14A, coarse language)
 Daily 12:50, 3:10, 5:25, 8:10, 10:20

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL (14A)
 Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:20, 3:50, 6:50, 9:40; Tue 3:50, 6:50, 9:40; Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

VANTAGE POINT (14A, violence)
 Daily 1:30, 4:10, 7:45, 10:15

BE KIND REWIND (PG)
 Daily 9:50

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG, frightening scenes)
 Daily 12:10, 2:20, 4:40, 7:25

STEP UP 2 THE STREETS (PG)
 Daily 12:05

JUMPER (PG, violence, coarse language)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 12:40, 2:50, 5:20, 7:30, 10:00; Sat 3:05, 5:20, 7:30, 10:00

HANNAH MONTANA AND MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS (G)
 Digital Daily 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10

METROPOLITAN OPERA: PETER GRIMES (Classification not available)
 Sat 11:30 am

CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH

10000 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 No Passes Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 2:15, 3:15, 4:30, 5:30, 6:40, 7:40, 9:00, 9:45; Tue 12:00, 2:15, 3:15, 4:30, 5:30, 6:40, 7:40, 9:00, 9:45; Star and Strollers: No Passes Tue 1:00

DOOMSDAY (18A, brutal violence, gory scenes)
 Daily 1:40, 4:40, 7:45, 10:30

NEVER BACK DOWN (14A, violence)
 Daily 1:10, 4:10, 7:15, 10:00

COLLEGE ROAD TRIP (G)
 Daily 12:10, 2:30, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40

10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 Daily 12:15, 1:15, 3:00, 4:00, 6:30, 7:30, 9:20, 10:20

THE BANK JOB (14A, mature themes, nudity, violence)
 Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:45, 4:45, 7:50, 10:30; Tue 4:45, 7:50, 10:30; Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

SEMI-PRO (14A, coarse language)
 Daily 12:40, 3:10, 5:40, 8:15, 10:45

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL (14A)
 Daily 12:50, 3:40, 7:10, 9:50

BE KIND REWIND (PG)
 Daily 2:10, 5:20, 8:00, 10:45

VANTAGE POINT (14A, violence)
 Daily 2:00, 4:20, 7:45, 10:10

FOOL'S GOLD (PG, violence)
 Daily 9:30

JUNO (14A, coarse language, mature themes)
 Fri, Sun-Thu 1:20, 3:50, 6:45, 9:15; Sat 3:50, 6:45, 9:15

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG, frightening scenes)
 Daily 12:45, 3:30, 6:50

JUMPER (PG, violence, coarse language)
 Fri-Tue, Thu 1:30, 4:15, 8:10, 10:40; Wed 1:30, 4:15, 10:40

HANNAH MONTANA AND MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS (G)
 Digital Fri-Sat, Mon-Thu 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10; Sun 12:30, 2:40, 4:40, 7:00, 9:10

METROPOLITAN OPERA: PETER GRIMES (Classification not available)
 Sat 11:30 am

CINEPLEX WEST MALL

10000 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

MAD MONEY (PG, coarse language)
 Fri 4:10, 6:50, 9:10; Sat-Sun 1:20, 4:10, 6:50, 9:10; Mon-Thu 6:50, 9:10

CLOVERFIELD (14A, frightening scenes)
 Fri 4:40, 7:30, 9:45; Sat-Sun 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 7:30, 9:45; Mon-Thu 7:30, 9:45

SWENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET (18A, gory scenes)
 Daily 8:45

P.S. I LOVE YOU (PG, coarse language)
 Fri, Mon-Thu 6:30, 9:00; Sat-Sun 12:50, 3:45, 6:30, 9:00

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (G)
 Fri 6:00, 7:15, 9:30; Sat-Sun 12:45, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30; Mon-Thu 7:15, 9:30

ENCHANTED (G)
 Fri 4:15, 6:40, 9:15; Sat-Sun 1:15, 4:15, 6:40, 9:15; Mon-Thu 6:40, 9:15

BEE MOVIE (G)
 Fri 4:45, 6:45; Sat-Sun 12:30, 2:30, 4:45, 6:45; Mon-Thu 6:45

I AM LEGEND (14A, frightening scenes)
 Fri 4:20, 7:20, 9:40; Sat-Sun 1:10, 4:20, 7:20, 9:40; Mon-Thu 7:20, 9:40

THE GOLDEN COMPASS (PG, violence, not recommended for young children)
 Fri 4:00, 7:00, 9:20; Sat-Sun 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:20; Mon-Thu 7:00, 9:20

CITY CENTRE 8

10200-102 Ave. 421-7020

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 Dolby Stereo Digital Fri, Mon-Thu 12:00, 2:15, 4:35, 6:50, 9:10; Sat-Sun 9:45, 12:00, 2:15, 4:35, 6:50, 9:10

HANNAH MONTANA AND MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS (G)
 No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri, Mon-Thu 11:45, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:15; Sat-Sun 9:30, 11:45, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:15

NEVER BACK DOWN (14A, violence)
 DTS Digital Daily 12:50, 3:30, 7:20, 10:00

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL (14A)
 DTS Digital Daily 12:30, 3:10, 6:30, 9:30

10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 Dolby Stereo Digital Daily 1:00, 3:40, 7:10, 9:50

DOOMSDAY (18A, brutal violence, gory scenes)
 DTS Digital Daily 1:10, 3:50, 7:30, 10:05

MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY (PG)
 DTS Digital Fri-Wed 1:30, 4:10, 6:35, 9:00; Thu 1:30, 4:10, 6:35

IN BRUGES (18A, violence, coarse language)
 DTS Digital Fri-Wed 1:20, 4:00, 6:40, 9:40; Thu 1:20, 4:00, 9:40

THE BANK JOB (14A, mature themes, nudity, violence)
 DTS Digital Daily 12:40, 3:20, 7:30, 10:10

CLAREVIEW 10

10000 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG, frightening scenes)
 Daily 1:40, 4:25

JUMPER (PG, violence, coarse language)
 Daily 2:10, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50

VANTAGE POINT (14A, violence)
 Daily 7:15, 9:05, Sat, Sun, Tue 2:15

SEMI-PRO (14A, coarse language)
 Daily 1:30, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45

COLLEGE ROAD TRIP (G)
 Daily 12:40, 2:45, 4:50, 7:05, 9:10

10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 On 2 Screens Daily 1:00, 1:50, 4:00, 4:35, 6:30, 7:10, 9:15, 9:40

DOOMSDAY (18A, brutal violence, gory scenes)
 Daily 1:20, 4:10, 6:40, 9:20

NEVER BACK DOWN (14A, violence)
 Daily 1:10, 3:50, 6:45, 9:35

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 Fri, Mon-Thu 12:30, 2:20, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00; Sat-Sun 10:10, 12:30, 2:20, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00

HANNAH MONTANA (G)
 Fri, Mon-Thu 11:45, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30; Sat-Sun 9:30, 11:45, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

GALAXY-SHERWOOD PARK

2020 Sherwood Drive. 416-0150

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 No Passes Fri 4:00, 4:50, 6:50, 7:30, 9:30, 9:50; Sat-Sun 12:00, 1:00, 2:30, 4:00, 4:50, 6:50, 7:30, 9:30, 9:50, Mon-Thu 6:50, 7:30, 9:30, 9:50

DOOMSDAY (18A, brutal violence, gory scenes)
 Fri 4:15, 7:15, 10:15; Sat-Sun 12:10, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15; Mon-Thu 7:15, 10:15

NEVER BACK DOWN (14A, violence)
 Fri 3:40, 7:10, 10:00; Sat-Sun 12:50, 3:40, 7:10, 10:00; Mon-Thu 7:10, 10:00

COLLEGE ROAD TRIP (G)
 Fri 4:40, 7:00, 9:20; Sat-Sun 1:30, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20; Mon-Thu 7:00, 9:20

10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 Fri 4:20, 7:20, 10:10; Sat-Sun 12:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:10; Mon-Thu 7:20, 10:10

SEMI-PRO (14A, coarse language)
 Fri 4:30, 7:40, 10:20; Sat-Sun 1:20, 4:30, 7:40, 10:20; Mon-Thu 7:40, 10:20

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL (14A)
 Fri 3:30, 6:30, 9:40; Sat-Sun 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:40; Mon-Thu 6:30, 9:40

VANTAGE POINT (14A, violence)
 Fri 3:50, 6:40, 9:10; Sat-Sun 12:40, 3:50, 6:40, 9:10; Mon-Thu 6:40, 9:10

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG, frightening scenes)
 Fri 4:10, 6:45, 9:45; Sat-Sun 1:10, 4:10, 6:45, 9:45; Mon-Thu 6:45, 9:45

GARNEAU

8712-102 St. 433-0728

JUNO (14A, coarse language, mature themes)
 Daily 7:00, 9:00; Sat, Sun 2:00

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave. St. 433-0728

PENELOPE (PG)
 Daily 12:45, 2:30, 4:15, 6:00

JUNO (14A, coarse language, mature themes)
 Daily 7:45, 9:35

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG, frightening scenes)
 Daily 1:40, 3:55, 6:05

SEMI-PRO (14A, coarse language)
 Daily 7:55, 9:40

STEP UP 2 THE STREETS (PG)
 Daily 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:20, 9:20

10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 Daily 12:50, 2:55, 4:55, 7:05, 9:15

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 No passes Daily 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 8:45

DUGGAN CINEMA-CAMROSE

660148 Ave. Camrose. 780-608-2144

STEP UP 2 THE STREETS (PG)
 Daily 7:10 9:10 Sat-Sun, Tue 2:10

10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 Daily 7:05 9:15; Sat-Sun, Tue 2:05

SEMI-PRO (14A, coarse language)
 Daily 7:00 9:00; Sat-Sun, Tue 2:00

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
 Daily 7:15, 9:05, Sat, Sun, Tue 2:15

NEVER BACK DOWN (14A, violence)
 Daily 7:00, 9:20; Sat, Sun, Tue 2:00

LEDUC CINEMAS

10000 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

DATE OF ISSUE ONLY, THU, MAR. 13
 10,000 BC (PG, violence)
 Daily 7:00, 9:30; Sat-Sun 1:00, 3:30

DEFINITELY, MAYBE (PG, not recommended for young children)
 Daily 6:55, 9:25

FILM CAPSULES

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The man never returns, leaving behind a boy, D'Leh, who is the same age as Evelot.

The children grow up to be a very attractive young couple played by Steven Strait and Camilla Belle. D'Leh is competing to lead the tribe as the best mammoth hunter, and she ... looks really good in dreadlocks. When an evil tribe kidnaps Evelot and others, D'Leh and three men set off on a journey to recover members of the tribe. Somewhere along the way, they encounter giant killer turkeys, which may not be critical to the plot, but is worth mentioning because, hey, they're giant killer turkeys, and they also happen to be the best thing in the movie.

Despite the writers' dedication to the writings of Joseph Campbell, no time is spent developing what's at stake. An empty romance, a poorly explained backstory and hollow antagonists isolate action as the only redeeming quality.

It's an inadvertent throwback to the sexy and absurd prehistoric tales of the '60s and '70s, with a title almost directly lifted from the Raquel Welch vehicle, *One Million Years BC*. The big difference is *10,000 BC* keeps a straight face. Director Roland Emmerich (*The Day After Tomorrow*) seems to think that the story is engaging, and not just an excuse to pit man against beast, women against their oscillating vocal cords. The pitiful attempts at profound dialogue and revelations try to transcend the sheer silliness of the picture, and fail.

But come for the beasts and the battles, and you've got all you need: giant



MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY

killer turkeys.
MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY

DIRECTED BY SHARAT NARAYAN

WRITTEN BY DAVID MACFEE, SIMON HEATHY

STARRING FRANCES McDORMAND, LAMY ADAMS

★★★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vueweekly.com

It wouldn't be fair to suggest a relationship between the 1940s romantic send-up *Miss Pettigrew Lives For A Day* and those cheap and heinous luggage store purses with rhinestone-decorated prints of Marilyn, Audrey or the *Sex and*

the City girls. The former makes a far meatier proposal of glamour, making its claim with a dazzling wardrobe and production design, not to mention a cast of performances that effortlessly evoke the period like a second skin. But the romantic sentiment of its intended demographic—white, Liberal-voting, college-dropout soccer-moms-in-training and their preceding generations—ties them neatly together like Lindor chocolates at the end of a chicken dinner combo at Swiss Chalet. In other words, it's hardly a challenge to absorb the triv-

iality of its historical experience.

Let me explain.

Frances McDormand stars as Guinevere Pettigrew, a failed maid and London street urchin who passes herself off for a single day as the "social secretary" of temptress singer Delysia LaFosse (Amy Adams, aka Nicole Kidman: The Animated Series). Miss Pettigrew's adventure involves, most significantly, keeping Delysia's socialite reputation intact as she leaps between three potential male suitors: Phil, the son of a stage producer, Nick, a playwright, and Michael, a pen-

niless ex-con pianist. They're all in running for her affections, and as Miss Pettigrew learns, they're considered most valuable in accordance with how they can advance her career.

So they follow each other about town, from a classy lingerie runway show (probably the best scene in the film) to a glitzy (though somewhat cliché) nightclub, encountering a number of strange occurrences and disagreements with the fashionable aristocracy of London, including Miss Pettigrew's potentially romantic heart-to-hearts with a renowned fashion designer (Ciaran Hinds). Ultimately, she makes it her goal to unite Delysia with the man for whom she shows the greatest sincerity—though time is running out and she must act fast.

Based on Winifred Watson's 1938 novel, *Miss Pettigrew* frames its portrayal of the period with a visual grace that anybody's gay uncle would applaud in Yves St Laurent gloves. Oscar-nominated production designer Sarah Greenwood (*Atonement*, *Pride and Prejudice*) and costume designer Michael O'Connor drive most of the film's appeal, providing the classic presence of both McDormand and Adams with exquisite threads and scenery.

But the ordinarily themed plotline gets the better of *Miss Pettigrew*—what sounds like a mature, thoughtful flirtation with a fascinating period turns into a romantic comedy that, via both Delysia and Miss Pettigrew's search for love, celebrates all those things any other contemporary smile-fest might. It's so poised, it's entirely unoriginal and aggravating to anybody who sits down expecting a fresh alternative to any other crowd pleaser. ▽

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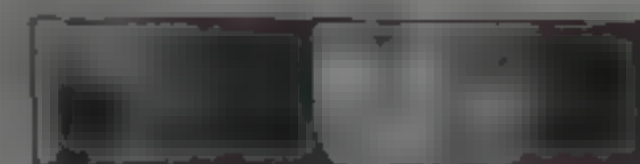
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(780) 432-5224

LEFT SPINE DOWN / 44



ANGIE NUSSEY / 46



MARIA DUNN / 48



Frehley kisses the *Psycho Circus* goodbye

When does it start warming up?" asks **Ac Frehley** over the phone from a recording studio where the former Kiss guitarist is currently holed up hard at work trying to wrap up production on his first solo album since 1989's *Trouble Walkin'*. "I'm excited about playing Edmonton

It turns out that Frehley, despite having been around the globe many a time with Kiss, still remembers his first trip to town.

"Edmonton was one of the first shows I ever did with Kiss, on our very first tour," he recalls. "I was just looking through some photos this morning and I found a snapshot I had taken of Paul [Stanley], Gene [Simmons] and Peter [Criss] with big coats on and wrapped up with scarves because it was freezing."

That was a long time ago, now—Feb 5, 1974, when Kiss kicked off its *Love Gun* tour at the Winter Garden Forum—and Frehley has since left the band not once, but twice. His first exit was in 1982, followed by a second in 2002 after a six-year reunion with the band. Looking back, Frehley has no regrets about leaving the makeup behind either time.

"It was a big relief the first time and it was a big relief the second time," he admits, before adding with a refreshingly honest laugh, "Gene knows how to push my buttons, so maybe it's not

PREVUE

SAT MAR 15 (8 PM)

ACE FRENLEY

1914-1915

the healthiest situation for me."

Simmons is well known for his overbearing personality, making no apologies for trying to make a buck at every turn, and that holds true today when it comes to Kiss and Frehley's trademark "Space Ace" makeup. Back in '82, Frehley's replacement, Vinnie Vincent, was given his own makeup to wear on stage, but the current incarnation of the band instead has a guitarist dressed up in Frehley's makeup (and a drummer in Criss's, for that matter).

"There [are] a lot of Kiss cover bands out there, and I guess Kiss has turned into a cover band at this point in a way," Frehley chuckles, retaining a sense of humour about the situation. "I know most fans that I speak to are kind of unhappy with the lineup and the fact that other people are dressed up in my makeup and Peter's makeup, but I wasn't part of that decision, so I really don't have much to say about it. It's not something that I'm thrilled about, but it's out of my control."

TODAY FREHLEY HAS beaten some addictions that nearly killed him over the years, and he's looking at the positive side of being out on his own once more: he's now the leader of his

own band.

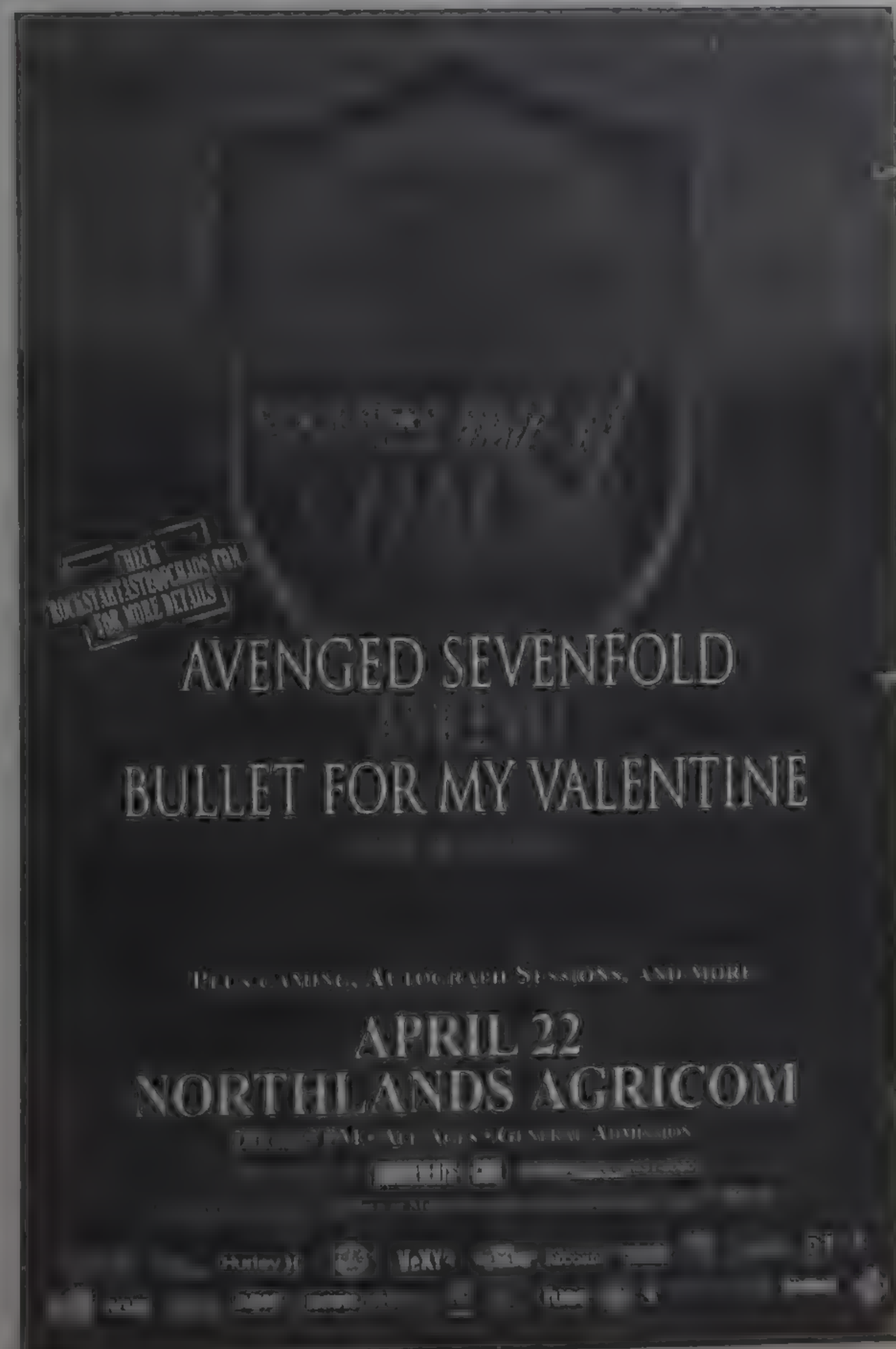
"It's always nice to be able to have creative freedom," he says. "There's a couple of songs that are gonna be on this record that I submitted to Paul and Gene for the *Psycho Circus* [Kiss reunion] record and they shot 'em down. There was always a lot of competition between all of us, and in most cases that's a good thing—it makes for a better album."

Despite the lengthy period between solo albums, Frehley says that he never stopped writing songs. There were the ones that he wrote for Kiss, along with a bunch for a solo album that never materialized.

"Right before I was offered the Kiss reunion tour in '96, my band was all set to go over to Germany and do an album ... and I had to put it off," he remembers. "So once I got on the road with Kiss it kind of became another roller coaster ride for me, and that lasted till 2001, 2002. It took me a while to get myself back in focus and healthy. I'd been writing songs all along—there are some songs on this record that I wrote back in '95, and there are a lot of new songs that I wrote over the past year or two."

The guitarist is determined to get his new album finished and out on the streets this year, but he also refuses to rush it out at the expense of quality. One advantage of writing all the time and having years of material

CONTINUED ON PAGE A19



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MUSIC WEEKLY

FRI LIVE MUSIC

THE ARTERY DJ Chomey Lee, the
Bummers, 7pm-midnight

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL

AXIS CAFE Friday Live Music Nights

BLUE CHAIR CAFE

CLUB SELECT

CRUISING WITH THE PARTY PUB

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Franks: Playing the best in country

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ALBERTA MUSIC INFORMATION SESSION

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com

The Western Canadian Music Awards are coming to town from Oct 16 - 19. That may sound pretty simple, but there's a lot more to the weekend than just another awards show, including a conference and a music festival. That's why the Alberta Music Industry Association—Alberta Music, for short—is going to be hosting one of its industry information sessions on Wed, Mar 19, covering a number of aspects related to the WCMAs. Besides some basic information about the conference, attendees can learn how to submit albums for nomination and how to apply for a showcase spot during the festival.

Rick Fenton, the executive director of the Western Canadian Music Alliance, the organization that hosts the awards each year and which also acts as an umbrella group for Alberta Music and its sister industry associations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Yukon, explains exactly why you should be interested in the

upcoming information session

"We want to celebrate the success of this industry and we want to promote the success of this industry," he says over the phone from Toronto, where he's in the thick of Canadian Music Week. "I mean, beyond the fact that it's great to win awards, there is media there ... Our goal is to promote Western Canadian music worldwide, through web properties through independent labels, through the marketing of the great pool of talent that we have. So the awards are just sort of the crowning moment of that year's success and artistic depth."

"Because we have such a large number of delegates coming in from record labels, online properties, agents, managers and a lot of promoters—people from all the different festivals, soft-seater theatres, university campuses, bars, clubs—it's an opportunity for them to go out and see the pool of talent," he continues. "We're looking at over 75 artists in between 10 and 15 venues, as well as the awards show."

Fenton also notes that the festival is not just for industry-types. Anyone who likes live music will surely find something that they'll enjoy over those three nights.

"For fans, it's an opportunity to celebrate your favourite bands, and also to

discover new music," he suggests enthusiastically. "And I think that's the pattern of the industry in the new digital media age, in that the same things that happen online with so many fans now discovering artists in a whole new way—through Facebook, through Sonibids, through word of mouth, through friend forums and stuff like that—I think the music fan now is looking for a wider scope of music. Not that there's anything wrong with picking it up from a CD store, but we all know that that paradigm is changing. And so the festival is a real opportunity for artists to come from across Canada and connect with a new fanbase."

And, finally, Fenton points out that participating bands are given a delegate pass so that one of their members can take advantage of the tools that are available during the conference.

"We do a lot of seminars on how to promote themselves, we have keynote speakers who are big success stories—Terry McBride from Nettwerk Music Group was our keynote speaker last year," Fenton says. "So it's an opportunity for artists and industry professionals to get together and talk about the business, look at emerging technologies, look at best practices and create more success stories within the industry."

Wind Ensemble 7pm, \$15 (adults/\$10 (senior/student) at TIX on the Square, Edmonton

BACKSTAGE TAP AND GRILL Industry Night with Atomic Improv, Jameela and DJ Tim

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Latest and greatest in House, Progressive and Trance, Rudy Electro, 10pm-2:30am, guest DJs in residence at kelly@buddys.com

EMPIRE BALLROOM Rock, hip hop, house, mash up

ESMERALDA'S Super Parties Every Sat a different theme

HINKY BUDDHA (WHYTE AVE) Top

GINGUR SKY Soulful Saturdays

HALO For Those Who Know: house, Sat with DJ Junior Brown, Luke Morrison, Nestor Delano, An Rhodes

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Sizzle Saturday DJ Groovy Cuy and guests

NEW CITY SUBURBS Saturday Sucks: electro, industrial, alt and indie, rock with DJs Greg Gory and Blue Jay, \$5

PLANET INDIGO Jasper Avenue Suggestive Saturdays: breaks electro house with PI residents

RED STAR Saturdays indie rock, hip hop, and electro with DJ Hot Philly and guests

RENEZVOUS Survival metal night

SPORTSMAN'S HOLLERS Disco Sportsworld lounge and Roller Skating Disco: Top 40 request with a mix of retro and disco, 1-5pm and 7pm-12 midnight

STOLL'S ON WHYTE Top 40, R&B house with People's DJ

TEMPLE Oh Snap! Every Saturday with Degree and Ailout DJs with weekly guests, 9pm

WUNDERBAR Sundays DJ Gaiatea and XS, guests; no cover

Y AFTERHOURS Re-opens Saturdays

SUN LIVE MUSIC

BLUE CHAIR CAFE Rosette Guitars

CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB Sunday jam, 7pm

DUSTER'S PUB Sunday open stage hosted by the Mary Thomas Band

EDDIE SHORTS Every Sunday open stage with Rob Taylor, 4-8pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE Senj Tankian, Fair to Midland

HULBERT'S PUB Sunday Night music hosted by Rhine March, 7pm, no cover

JAMMERS PUB Sunday open blues jam, 4-8pm

JOHN L. HAAR THEATRE Band Concert—MacLellan March of Music, directed by jazz guitarist Bobby Cairns, 7-9pm, \$7 (adults/\$5 (student/senior) at TIX on the Square, the

NEWCASTLE PUB Live Sunday jam hosted by Wily and Dave, 2:30pm

NEW CITY Left Spine Down, Front Line Assembly, The Black Halos, Static Sun, no minors, 8pm (door)

O'BRYNE'S Sunday night open stage with Joe Bird

ON THE ROCKS Soulful Fya Sundays with DJ Me

OSCAR'S PUB Open stage Sundays hosted by Chris Winters of Captain Tractor, 8-11pm

OVERDRIVE Anything Goes: acoustic jam every Sunday afternoon with the Shuttlehound, 1:30-5pm

SHOW CONFERENCE CENTRE Tanxian, all ages, 8pm, \$29.50 at TicketMaster

CLASSICAL

CONVOCAATION HALL Organ Fanfare 8pm, \$20 (adults), \$15 (senior), \$10 (student) at TIX on the Square, the door

CONVOCAATION HALL Convocation Hall: visiting artist Neil Cockburn (organ), 3pm, \$20 (adults), \$15 (senior), \$10 (student) tickets at TIX on the Square, 420-1757, the door

ROYAL COACH DINING ROOM Petru Polujin (classical guitar), 5pm

VENUE GUIDE

• ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL 7704-104 St, 432-4611 • AVENUE SKATEPARK 9030-118 Ave • AXIS CAFE 10349 Jasper Ave, 990-0031 • BACKDRAUGHT PUB 8307-99 St, 430-9200 • BACKROOM VODKA BAR 10324A-82 Ave, upstairs, 436-4418 • THE BANK ULTRA LOUNGE 10765 Jasper Ave 420-9098 • BAR WILD 10552 82 Ave, 432-0814 • BEERHUNTER'S PUB-ST. ALBERT 386 St. Albert Rd, St. Albert • BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Continental Inn, 16625 Stony Plain Rd, 484-7751 • BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE 10425-82 Ave, 439-1082 • BLIND PIG PUB 32 St. Anne Street, St. Albert, 418-6332 • BLUE CHAIR CAFE 9624-76 Ave, 989-2861 • BLUES ON WHYTE 10329-82 Ave, 439-3981 • BOHEMIA CYBER CAFE 11012 Jasper Ave, 426-4767 • BOOTS 10242-106 St, 423-5014 • BREWSTERS PUB Oliver Square, 11620-104 Ave (482-4677) • "B" SCENE STUDIOS 8212-104 St • BUDDY'S 11725B Jasper Ave, 488-6636 • CAFE LEVA 11053-86 Ave • CASINO EDMONTON 7055 Argyle Rd, 483-9467 • CASINO YELLOWHEAD 12464-153 St, 424-9467 • CENTURY CASINO 13103 Fort Rd, 643-4000 • CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB 2021 Milbourne Rd, West, 462-6565 • CLIFF'S PUB 8214-175 St • COAST TO COAST PUB AND GRILL 5552 Calgary Trail, 439-8675 • CONVOCAATION HALL Arts Building, University of Alberta, 492-0601 • COWBOYS 10102-180 St, 481-8739 • CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB 15277 Castle Downs Rd, 113 St, 472-7696 • DINWOODIE LOUNGE U of A Campus • DRUID 11606 Jasper Ave, 454-9928 • DUSTER'S PUB 6402-118 Ave, 474-5554 • EDDIE SHORTS 10713-124 St, 453-3663 • EDMONTON EVENTS CENTRE WEM Phase III, 489-SHOW • EMPIRE BALLROOM WEM Phase 2, upper level, WEM, 486-9494 • FESTIVAL PLACE Telus Theatre, 100 Festival Way, Sherwood Park, 449-3378 • FIDDLER'S ROOST 8906-99 St • FILTHY MCNASTY'S 10511-82 Ave, 916-1557 • FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 10025-105 St • FLUID LOUNGE 10105-109 St, 780-429-0700 • FOUR ROOMS Edmonton Centre, 102 Ave, 426-4767 • FOX 8906-99 St • FUNKY BUDDHA (Whyte Ave) 10341-82 Ave, 433-9676 • GAS PUMP 10166-114 St, 488-9928 • GIBBONS HOTEL 10101 Jasper Ave, 436-2401 • GINGUR SKY 1515-118 Ave, 913-4312/953-3606 • HALO 10638 Jasper Ave, 423-4141 • HOOLIGANZ 10324A-82 Ave, upstairs, 436-4418 • THE BANK ULTRA LOUNGE 10765 Jasper Ave 420-9098 • BAR WILD 10552 82 Ave, 432-0814 • BEERHUNTER'S PUB-ST. 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Left Spine Down is *Fighting for Voltage*

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuweekly.com

It sounds like Denyss McKnight has got a permagrin as he strolls the streets of Vancouver giving an interview about the band he plays bass for, **Left Spine Down** (LSD).

"Today we got asked to submit a song for a Nirvana tribute album," he explains. "And we just got the acceptance letter today, so we're pretty

PREVIEW

SUN, MAR 16 (8 PM)
LEFT SPINE DOWN
W/ THE SQUAT, THE BANGS, THE
NEW CITY, \$10

stoked on that. Don't know who else is on there, but we're really, really excited about this."

And it is pretty cool, but that's not

all he's high about. The six-piece band is also in the throes of finishing up the followup to its *Smartbomb* EP—*Fighting for Voltage*, which is set for release in late April.

"We're self-releasing with the help of a distributor called Indie Pool, because independent seems to be the way to go these days: A little more flexibility; a little more control," he says. "A few different labels that we talked to ... as much as people say they don't, everybody kind of wants to make it their own and mould you into their own vision of what you should be, and we're way too egotistical for that."

"We think that we're cool enough as we are," he laughs.

FUSING ALL OF THE heaviness of metal punk and drum 'n' bass, Left Spine Down bashes out hard-hitting tracks. While you can hear slight tinges of a Front Line Assembly influence—two of LSD's members (Jeremy Inkel and Jared Slingerland) and its producer (Chris Peterson) play with the electro-industrial band—Left Spine Down aims its driving beats far more squarely at the solar plexus.

It was this sonic assault that made McKnight want to join the band a couple of years ago. At the time, he was in the Black Halos, but after much harassment, was finally asked to join the LSD fold.

"I told Jared, the guitar player—I kind of threatened him actually—I told him, one day I am going to be in your band and you're going to hate it," McKnight jokes. "And I guess they were looking for a drummer and they found Tim [Hagberg], and they finally let me join two years later [in 2006]."

It wasn't long before McKnight found that playing in three bands—he was also a member of Vancouver metal band Last Plague—involved too much drama, leading him to drop everything but LSD.

With six members—rounded out by Kalne D314y and Matt Girven—the band's writing process is very much group effort. Even though *Fighting for Voltage* will have the tracks of the four-song EP on it—which were written before McKnight and Hagberg joined—they will be redone to incorporate the talents of the latest members, as all six of them dig into a way of writing together.

"The band is getting a little more cohesive. The writing's gotten a lot more solid. We're actually able to sit around and figure out what's working and what's new in our arrangements," McKnight says. "This is the best songwriting experience in my, like, 10 years of playing in a band." ▽

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PREVIEW
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SINK THIS CITY
WITH IRONS, DIE DAILY, GIFT EATERS, HOMINID, BAY-
DOLPHINS!!
JEKYLL & HYDE, \$10/\$15 (WITH CD)

ALYSSA NOEL / alyssa@vnuweekly.com
When Sink This City releases its debut EP this week it will be delivered with a bit of irony.

The point of the six-song disc was to "get something short and sweet out there quick," explains guitarist Tom Kerr.

Ten months later, with the finished package in hand, the band is just anxious to start work on a full-length. "It's been driving us nuts getting this finished because it has been a long process," he says. "We're all gung-ho on some new material."

But the disc, of course, wasn't a waste. Not only did the group get to lay down some songs, it was also excellent practice for when the members invest in a more extensive record. "The actual process of recording is a really good time for a band to grow and learn and get comfortable with each other," Kerr explains. "So the next time you sit down to record, you're better at it."

None of the pop-rock group's members are strangers to band dynamics, however. Each of them has spent time in different local bands. They came together, piece by piece, in the summer of 2006 after Kerr's band dissolved and he decided to seek out a few like-minded musicians who were looking to "hang out" and, basically, have a good time.

Although the band has aspirations of touring (and will, in fact, embark on a tour to Montréal this summer) that sentiment has stuck with it.

Kerr says he and his bandmates have no delusions of wanting to "make it." Music is more of a fun, albeit expensive, hobby. "What our common goal is is to have fun with it and be prolific and write songs and play for people," he says.

And he uses the term people in a literal sense. Young or old, rock or reggae, Kerr would like the band to play for them all. That's why Sink This City decided to have two EP release parties—one all ages show at Jekyll & Hyde (Mar 15) and another 18-plus show at the Pawn Shop (Mar 29).

"I prefer all ages shows to bar shows," he says. "I see bar shows' place in the community. I myself don't drink at all, so I never found a kinship with the bar ... I really, really like playing all ages shows because everyone is there for the music."

He also likes concerts that mix genres. "It's a little bit of something different and opening people to something they might not have otherwise heard. One of the things we've decided to do with this band is have a variety of shows," he says. "We'll have in a music community where there can be all different kinds of music on the show."

For now, the group has shared the love of indie rock, metal and punk. "I got a few different influences," Kerr explains. "It's not like it's pin us down musically. We're not a hardcore band, but we're not a pop band. Our music is just to have fun."

ACE FREHLEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

to draw from is that Frehley is able to choose the best songs to make the best album possible instead of simply cranking it out as fast as he can.

"Sometimes ... a group will come out with an album and the record company will say, 'Well, we need another album,' and between touring they throw a second album together,

and ... with a lot of groups their second album usually isn't as good as the first one because the first is something they were probably working on from outset of the band's conception," he explains. "Yeah, like I said, a lot of these songs have been around for a while, and of course some of them I wrote this year or in 2007, so I've had a lot of time to live with them and tweak them, and, you know, change things maybe after listening to them a few times—[things] that I thought could improve the song

or the melody."

WITH RECORDING almost finished, Frehley is ready to climb back onto the rock 'n' roll stage. His lay-off from the live arena hasn't been as long as the time between solo albums, but it took the guitarist several years after splitting from Kiss before he got back to performing more than the odd song or two, starting with a live show in New York on Halloween of 2007. Looking back on it now, Frehley is a

little surprised that it took him as long as it did to get back at it.

"When I did that show on Halloween in New York City, I walked off the stage and I said, 'Wow, this is what I do best—why have I waited so long?'" he remembers. "It just took me a long time to put it all together, you know? When I got off the Kiss tour I had to deal with my own demons and my addictions. Luckily, today I'm clean and sober 16 months and life's turned around for me." ▽

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Hey, buddy, you've got to hear this song

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com

A few years ago Angie Nussey started university with inten-

Then she experienced that feeling that a lot of students get. doubt. It's easy to decide on a career when you're looking at things like course names and potential salaries on paper, but goals can change once you get down to earning that degree and really see what it's all about. Nussey began working towards that career she decided that maybe medicine wasn't exactly what she wanted to spend her life doing after all.

"Isn't that the way it goes?" she laughs over the phone from Toronto. "And I think some people can handle it mentally—they can push through. I admire those people who've got the determination to set their mind on something and even if it seems a little different from what they thought, they can push through, but with me I can't. I just get so depressed and it always seems that the wind is pushing me [towards music]. I've been at this for 10 years and it seems like even in my times of trying to quit performing in public and just sort of doing it on my own, it always seems like something will come up that will make me go

PREVIEW FRI. MAR. 14 (7:30 PM)
ANGIE NUSSEY
CD RELEASE
WHEN YOU HEAR THE MUSIC, YOU'LL KNOW

out again and do it again and it just seems like the right thing to do.

"I've been playing since I was seven and writing since I was young, too, but I didn't really consider it a career until I got into university," she continues, recalling her transition from medicine. "I was a bit bummed out and not really happy with where I was, and my mom said, 'Well, you really like to sing and you've got all these songs, you should probably try doing something with music,' and at that point I ended up going into opera-singing lessons and I joined a cover band on the weekends and I liked it. I like a lot of aspects of it—it's an interesting business—and I think somebody's got to do it. You've got to have musicians or the world would be really boring."

THESE DAYS, NUSSEY is great at assuming that the world is a changing place for musicians. With digital distribution become increasingly popular, Nussey has made her music available in CD form through internet sites like CD

Baby and Indie Pool, and in an entirely digital format through iTunes.

"This digital shift—I don't feel ahead of it, that's for sure," she chuckles. "I'm definitely not against the new digital era because I think it's going to be a lot of fun. As CD covers go, and stuff like that, but there is a nervous feeling among a lot of musicians ... I think there will be a section of time that it'll be hard to make a living at what we do, especially off of our music, but those times are changing too. It's a matter of getting it worked out and pushing through that little section of time."

The internet has made it possible for pretty much anyone with a computer to put their music out there for everyone to hear, resulting in an increasing deep pool of artists for listeners to wade through, but Nussey isn't worried that the wider availability of music will signal the end for artists making a living in the business.

"It seems like good songs and good music, they stand out," she states. "I still end up coming around by word of mouth. That's how I usually find out about music. Someone says, 'You've got to listen to this.' Those who have something really special you end up finding them anyway." ▽

VIEW
SAT MAR 15 (8:00 PM)
THE SURGENTS
WITH POLITE LIVE, ILLFIT OUTFIT
METRO BILLIARDS CAFÉ, \$10 (ADVANCE), \$12 (DOOR)

GFY HANDLEY / gen@vueweekly.com
On paper, the three members of the Surgents don't have a lot in common. The lead singer and songwriter is an elementary school teacher, the drummer is a lawyer and the keyboard player and producer is, well, an experienced music producer. But in person, it's obvious that there is a genuine chemistry between the three.

"My day job is a lawyer," drummer Cory Zimmerman says.

"Yeah, his day job is a lawyer," singer Justin Oberst jumps in jokingly. "He sells a lot of beer on the day."

"Right," Zimmerman says back to his friend. "But I can't back at night."

Meanwhile, keyboard player Tomas Brabec laughs and drinks his beer, shaking his head at his two bandmates.

Even though the Surgents have only been together for about six months, the band has recorded an EP, currently has a video on MuchMusic and was Sonic's Band of Month last October. Each of the Surgents has been around the local music scene for a while now, with Oberst and Zimmerman playing in bands during university and Brabec producing names that range from Justin Timberlake to Korn to his 17-month-old son.

"I put some dance beats behind his singing and it was a family hit, of course," he says.

All of these musicians are proud fathers. But even with family life and careers to juggle, they are still dedicated to playing music.

"We are professionals and we are family men," Oberst says with a tiny smile. "But at the core, we're fucking rock stars and we can rock with the best of them."

And that's what they intend to do when they play the annual Amnesty International

Benefit Concert on Saturday night. The Surgents are an obvious musical choice for the evening with the band's socially conscious songs and a politically charged logo in the background.

"We have an opportunity in our band to say something of significance," Zimmerman says, glancing around for agreement. "So I think we're paired up really well with Amnesty International."

All the band members are quite comfortable with starting musical careers at this point in their lives and aren't afraid to poke fun at themselves.

"I'm a child of the '80s," he says. "For me it's about the music and the visuals."

Brabec looks down, nodding in agreement.

"When I think of our shows, I think about the next Duran Duran," he says and then laughs.

"Don't fucking say that," Zimmerman says half-seriously and hits Brabec in the shoulder.

Immediately everyone at the table breaks into laughter. ▽

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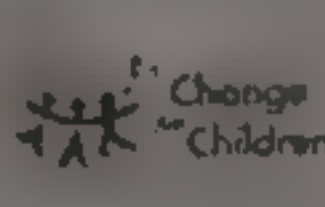
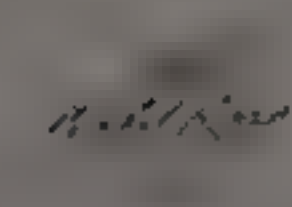


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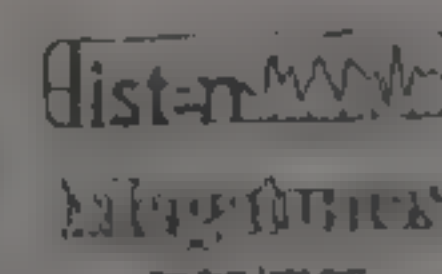
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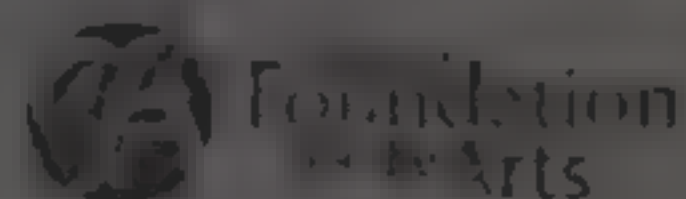
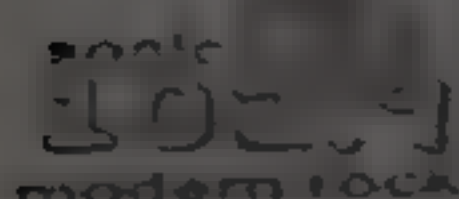
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Folk singer is writing about the women who made Wayne Gretzky's jeans

BOYANTHURSTIES / Noonan@vobanbursties.com

If you're reading this paper, it's probably safe to assume that you're not entirely satisfied with the results of the previous election (although that might be an unfair assumption—I'm sure *some* Conservative MLAs can read).

Well, neither is **Maria Dunn**. Known for her lyrical, Celtic-infused folk songs focusing primarily on everyday working people, Dunn has been

REVUE

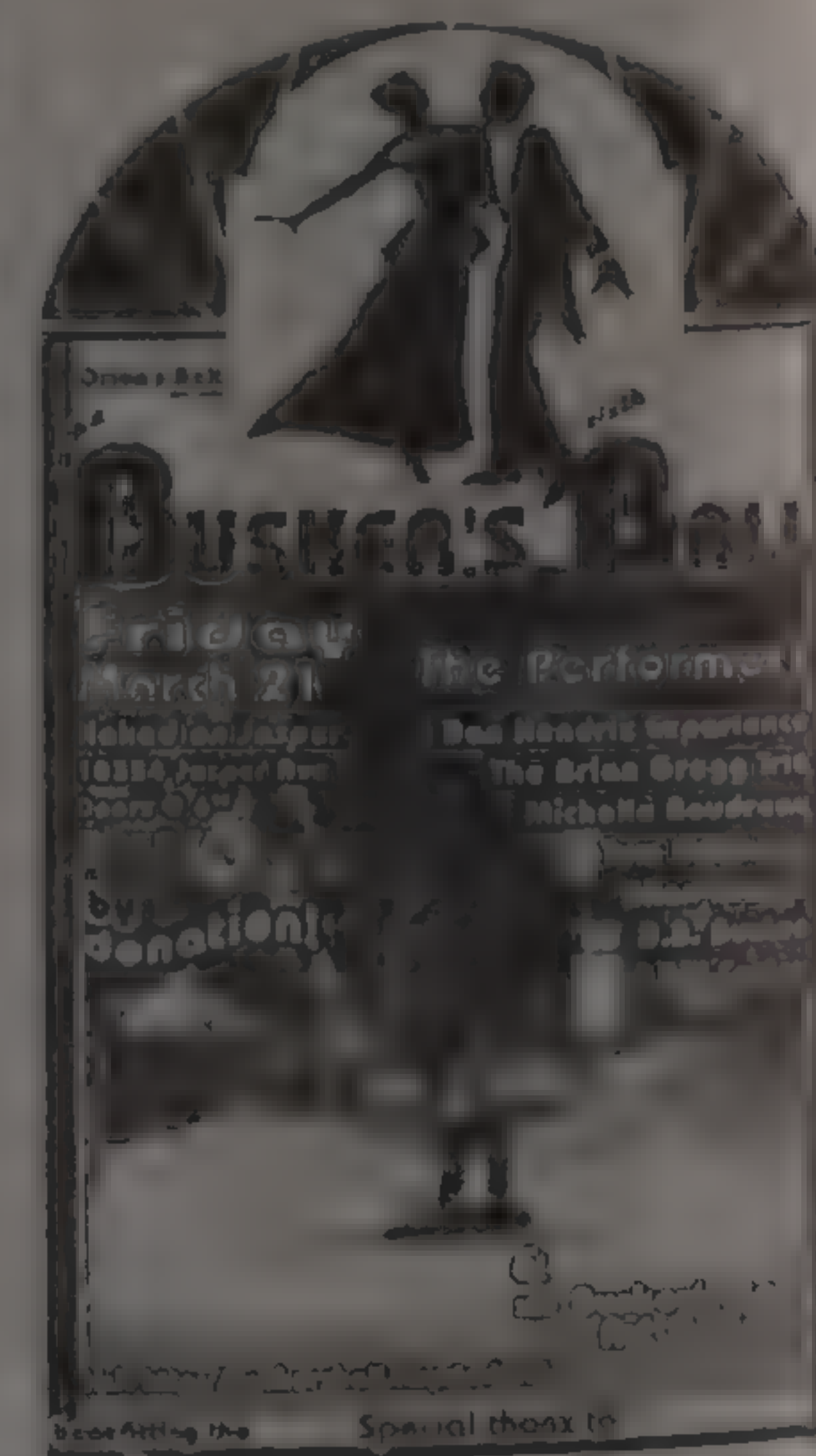
1. SAT MAR 15 '98 PM

MARIA DUNN

2000 HALEXPOSA COMMUNITY HALL \$12

involved with labour and left wing movements in a number of different capacities; in addition to her status as artist-in-residence at the Edinburgh District Labour Council, Dunlop penned anti-war songs, pro-labo-

FREE RECORDS

[illegible]

It was depressing. My mom said there will always be a bed for me in Ontario if I ever decide to give up on Alberta," she says. "I think it was really unfortunate we lost some NDP seats with some really good people—now we have fewer opposition seats

But enough of all that depressing stuff—we'll have four or five years to cry about all that—right now, the most important thing is that Dunn has a new album on the way sometime this summer. A departure from her 2004 historically themed concept album called *We Were Good People*, which recounted stories from Alberta's hard-

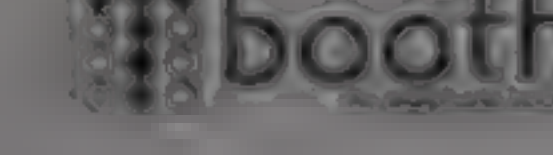
"There'll be a few anti-war songs, a few contemporary songs about justice and reconciliation, but there will also be songs that were more fun to write—adventure songs more in the Celtic storytelling tradition," she says, mentioning that the infusion of Celtic influence was a decision she made with her longtime producer Shannon Johnson of the McDades. "After doing some-

AS IF SHE WASN'T feeling scattered enough—or perhaps in an effort to regain some focus—Dunn is also currently hard at work on a new concept based project about the GWG clothing plant in Edmonton and the women who worked there, which is being funded through the Edmonton Cultural Capital Program. A sneak preview

"We'll be playing music from all three of my CDs and the one that's yet to be released, so it will be music from all those albums," she says. "It's always a real pleasure to play in the folk club atmosphere and to have a nice listening audience." **v**



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EDMONTONEVENTCENTRE.CAMARK PICKEREL & HIS PRAYING HANDS
CODY'S DREAM
BLOODSHOT

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

Mark Pickerel started his career off as the drummer in Screaming Trees, one of the many bands that emerged from the streets of Seattle when the music industry was calling that city the home of all the next big things. Where Screaming Trees had a definite psychedelic vibe going within the band's distorted rock, Pickerel left that all behind, quitting the group in 1991 in favour of travelling his own path. That road has led him to his latest album.

Cody's Dream is a healthy brew of roots and pop, leaning slightly more to the gritty side and away from the slick.

As the album opens up with the stomping title track, the first thing that jumps out is Pickerel's lyrics. For someone who used to be a drummer—generally considered the most neanderthal of all the various types of musicians—he's got a real way with words. And so he should if he's going to get away with an album that was birthed during a southern road trip by himself and his band. It's a song cycle that captures not just the physicality of his trip, but, more importantly, the thoughts and inspirations behind it.

As "Cody's Dream" plays out, Pickerel drops more than his share of

great lines, from "Cody and the Cowpunks / They never got it right / One day ahead of the curve / The next behind the times" to "Cody and the Cowpunks / They sang my favourite song / The song about getting out of this town / Finally moving on" to "Mom's got religion / Dad's got drink / I'm still holding onto Cody's dream."

It's a fantastic start to what amounts to a literary-styled exploration of Pickerel's journey—or at least the journey that he imagined. There are all sorts of characters to be found here, from the narrator's hero, Cody, to the intriguing and conflicted dreamer in the rolling grooves of "She Sleeps Through Sirens," and Pickerel manages to make you want to meet them all, if only for a few moments.

It's a tricky world that Pickerel is navigating here, but he finds his way—and leads the listener through the darkness—by using the songs as his road map. There's a rawness to the sound of the guitars here, and the drums practically rattle along, with the whole thing feeling a lot like a ride in the back of an old pick-up truck down the backroads of a world that is more concerned with simply finding something real and alive than with catching up with the Hollywood glitz on the latest episode of *Entertainment Weekly*.

It's not always pretty—in fact, it's not even pretty very often—but that's sort of what makes it so interesting.

On "Cherokee Grove" Pickerel combines a bouncy '60s melody with a guitar that groans with effort, and there's a subdued and kinda creepy cover of Bob Dylan's "One More Cup of Coffee" that Pickerel doesn't just make his own, but rather immerses himself in the song's dark and slow movements.

There's an occasional bump in the road—"I Promise" is sweet, but doesn't quite hold together for its length—but then that's probably a lot like Pickerel's trip, and it's really just a short moment on the way to another highlight, so it's not really that bad at all.

DANKO JONES
NEVER TOO LOUD
ADDITUS RECORDS

LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vuwweekly.com

Jones and his band don't seem to get that their record hits up every rock stereotype there is: songs about tits? Check. Liner notes filled with photos of the band resentfully staring at the camera to show you how rockin' and full of 'tude they are? Check. Boring three-chord thrash and repetitious guitar licks? Double-check on that one. Where the hell did this come from? I mean, Jones has multiple Juno nominations. There is either some profound irony going on here or *Never Too Loud* was made by a trio of petulant junior high students who have just figured out how to play power chords. The album calls to mind a quote from *This Is Spinal Tap*: "the musical growth rate of this band cannot even be charted. They are treading water in a sea of retarded sexuality and bad poetry."

DANIEL LEDWELL
TWO OVER SEVEN
DEAD PAST RECORDS

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuwweekly.com

Daniel Ledwell's sweet, mournful songs are simple and pared down folk-pop, focussed on Ledwell's gentle guitar and even more gentle, almost fragile vocals. Rose Cousin's back-up vocals and the soft layering of instruments adds a mournful depth that is perfectly fitting for the lyrical focus of the album: the vulnerability and aching of the heart that comes from

Above all, there's a tender familiarity to the songs, especially "I Have Made You a Mixtape," which charts the lifespan of this classic form of musical wooing, from the trepidation of initial innocence through misstep to the bitter finality of realizing it over. It's that sense of understanding familiar to anyone who has endured a relationship's end, that draws you into Ledwell's exploration.

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top 10 sellers

1. The Beatles - Abbey Road
2. The Rolling Stones - Exile on Main St.
3. The Who - Quadrophenia
4. The Kinks - The Village Green Preservation Society
5. The Beatles - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
6. The Rolling Stones - Sticky Fingers
7. The Who - Tommy
8. The Kinks - The Low Road
9. The Beatles - The White Album
10. The Rolling Stones - Let It Be

PHOTON BAND
BACK DOWN TO EARTH
EMERALD

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

For those of you not in the know, Earth will be fully enveloped in 2012 by the photon band, a particle belt which revolves around a star cluster 440 light years from Earth. Depending who you ask, this will result in either: a) massive electronic failure, b) a shift in global consciousness or c) absolutely nothing. (The latter being based on the fact that there is no proof that such a thing exists.)

Still, the concept does make for a pretty swell way to pass the time as you and your buddies try to ride out that double of acid, and, perhaps not coincidentally, the same can be said for *Back Down to Earth*.

Alternately—and sometimes concurrently—reminiscent of the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Keith Moon-era the Who, and infused with Hendrix in all his *Electric Ladyland* glory, it's a bluesy, catchy wander through a modern version of a late-'60s record store just off Haight.

HAIR! QUICK SPINS
WHITEY AND TB PLAYED
quickspins@vancouverweekly.com

FAREWELL TO FREEWAYS
DEFINITIONS
VICTORY

Such sweet metal; ruined!
Why must that screaming asshat
Open his damn mouth?

BRYAN ADAMS
11
UNIVERSAL

Canadian king
Of bland-ass vanilla rock
Serves up one more scoop

CREATURE
NO SLEEP AT ALL
BANDSOUND

In old Montreal,
The talent, fun and cocaine
All flow like water

FLICKER
BEFORE THE SUN
RIKER HILL

Poor man's shitty rock
Actually, it don't sound great
To rich folks either

PROTEST THE HERO
FOURTHLESS
WINDUP

Eye-rolling metal
Done with finesse and style
Not too shabby boys

WU TANG
8 DIAGRAMS
SRG/UNIVERSAL

Pour one on the ground
For Ol' Dirty, cuz it ain't
The same without him

2 HOURS TRAFFIC
LITTLE JABS
CRIMINAL

I just saw these guys
And got all gay about them
And their fine live show

The following CD was reviewed by
both Whitey and TB, to differing ends:

WHAT MADE MILWAUKEE FAMOUS
WHAT DOESN'T KILL US
BARSUK

The real question is.
What made What Made Milwaukee
Famous famous ... huh?

See? Rock can still be
Intelligent, without being
An arrogant ass

Farewell to 'The Hair'

MUSIC **ENTER SANDOR**
STEVEN SANDOR
Editor-in-Chief

Edmonton's music scene lost one of its greats this week.

I have known Gary McGowan for well over a decade; as a fellow media person, as a music promoter, as a partner in the Starlite Room and, most importantly, as a friend.

Anyone who knew "The Hair," as we liked to call him—let's face it, Gary's large 'do was his signature—was aware of his encyclopedic knowledge of rock 'n' roll. His friends used to tease him that he should go to Hollywood and make a few bucks on *Rock & Roll Jeopardy*, that yuppie VH1 take on the classic game show.

I remember once standing at the Shaw Conference Centre, watching Chris Martin bang the piano keys for Coldplay. I asked Gary what he thought of the whole Coldplay phenomenon and I will always remember his answer. I still think of it every time I hear that band. "I saw this band 20 years ago," he yelled as we stood beside the soundboard. "But back then they were called Supertramp."

Or there was the time a group of friends asked Gary if he'd ever heard of Poco; he then gave us a succinct biography of the band. Another great story, passed on by Gary's old friend Gene Kosowan, who used to edit a previous incarnation of this weekly, is that back in their CJSR days, the staff used to play a name-that-tune style of game. Drop the needle on a record, and name the song as fast as you possibly could. No one could beat Gary, and he'd often pick out obscure album tracks in seconds.

But what might be my favourite memo-



Gary McGowan (left) with *Vue Weekly* publisher and hippie-in-chief Ron Garth during Gary's tenure at the paper.

ry of Gary came on our first New Year's Eve at the Starlite. A group of staff knew that someone should address the crowd when the clock neared the zero hour; as Gary was the TV and radio personality, he was drafted, even though he guaranteed us he'd be no good for the job. We knew the opposite, and when Gary stood on the stage, his arms raised in the air, orchestrating the cheers from the audience as if he was a conductor, the rest of us simply marvelled at how quickly he could transform himself into the showman.

Gary, to me, was always a reminder of how rock music is cyclical. When you asked him about a new act, he would always refer back to a similar band from a past era. He placed music in a historical context.

He had a soft spot for Patti Smith's classic *Horses* album; on a night when music personalities from across the city were asked to play one favourite song each for a unique DJ night, Gary went back to that punk classic for the evening's opening tune.

Even though Gary had the big rock hair and a wide collection of '80s shirts, he was

one of the most honest-to-goodness punk rock people I'd ever met. Honest about his passion for the Edmonton music scene. When he was a partner in BAD Concerts, Edmonton was still an outpost to most touring acts, and he was one of the people who worked his tail off to prove to the bands that Edmonton should be a regular stop.

"It's fine to go on about civic boosterism and all that," he said almost a decade ago. "I'm sure they have a lot of civic pride in Biloxi, Mississippi, too. But that doesn't get you shows. It doesn't get you noticed ... A band doesn't come here because they read chamber of commerce literature. They come here because some promoter bugged them and said this is a good place to make money ... [but] the real reward is when the lights go down, the music comes on and the crowd is really getting into it. Then you know it's all worth it."

We will all miss him. Cue the Patti Smith. ▽

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Forget CNN, here's the latest from LGBTQNN

LGBT QUEERMONTON

TAMARA GORZALKA
tam@vuwweekly.com

Sometimes LGBTQ news stories of note hit the wire but aren't detailed enough to warrant a whole column. Here are a few of those sad, weird or interesting pieces from the last month.

ANOTHER DEAD, QUEER TEEN

"I gave him \$2 for the bus and he never came back," said Denise King, the mother of Simmie Lewis Williams Jr, 17, who was shot to death on Feb 22. The Fort Lauderdale native was attacked moments after witnesses heard him arguing with two men. He was wearing a dress at the time and police are considering the case as a possible hate crime.

Though his mother claims not to know anything about Simmie's gender-bending, he was known locally as 'Chris' or 'Beyonce.' It's not clear whether Williams was trans, gay or just a cross-dresser, since most reports seem to confuse those identities easily. He was buried in a suit because, according to King, "I gave birth to a boy, and my baby would be buried as a boy. I don't know what he did or didn't do across town," before adding, "What I know is that he was gay and didn't deserve to be gunned down because of who he was."

The grassy field where Williams was shot has since turned into a shrine with

candles, teddy bears and flowers. According to friends and family all Simmie wanted to do was become a chef and own his own restaurant. His friend Henry Thomas says, "There's been a lot of things said about Simmie. He was a good person. If you were hungry, he would feed you. If you were sad, he would minister to you. If he were sad, he would not want to burden you. He gave everybody a chance."

I discovered a fantastic foundation that aims to provide a memorial to all the (American) LGBT victims of hate-motivated murder: gayamericanheroes.com. How sad that we need a whole organization for that.

NO REPRIEVE FOR GAY MEN WHO WANT TO DONATE BLOOD

Canada's two blood-collection agencies have decided to continue the ban on blood donations from sexually active gay men, even after commissioning research on the ban's usefulness. Mark Wainberg and Norbert Gilmore of McGill University's AIDS Centre filed data with Hema-Québec and Canadian Blood Services saying that the test used to screen for HIV in donated blood is 10 000 times more sensitive now than the one used in the 1980s, when the gay donor ban originally went into effect. Testing aside, the prohibition only even remotely makes sense if we believe that gay men are much more likely to be HIV positive than anyone else, a claim we now know to be totally false.

Wainberg argued that lifting the ban

was likely to produce only one unit of contaminated blood every 18 years. Gilmore told a news conference if the ban were lifted, the Canadian blood supply would gain about 136 000 additional donations each year from gay men. The CBS might also regain many donors who have been turned off by its outdated policy.

EX-GAY TELEVISION

CTV's Sudbury affiliate probably didn't think too much about it when they agreed to air an ad for a local church, Life Productions Ministry. Maybe they should have, since the commercial they showed was an offer of homosexual rehabilitation. The spot ran seven times from Mar 3 to 5, but numerous complaints from viewers eventually resulted in the ad being pulled, with apologies from CTV.

The 30-second spot featured a mustached man talking to the camera, saying to viewers, "You hear about gay rights, gay marriage and the gay lifestyle being taught in our public schools to children. But what many people don't realize and seldom hear about is that many homosexuals don't want to be homosexual. What many who are struggling with homosexuality don't realize and seldom hear is that they can change. I should know. For 13 years I used to be one."

Interesting since CTV is one of Toronto Pride's sponsors. Angry viewers quickly formed a Facebook group with more than 1000 members and started contacting

CTV to get the commercial of the air. The network quickly agreed. You can check out the offensive ad at Life Productions's website, and while you're there be sure to take their test to find out if you're good enough to go to heaven.

GAYS MAKE THE EARTH SHAKE (AND NOT IN THE GOOD WAY)

Israel's recent earthquake was all the fault of the homos, according to Knesset member Shlomo Benizri. During a parliamentary debate on earthquake preparedness the Shas member stated, "Why do earthquakes happen? One of the reasons is the things to which the Knesset gives legitimacy to. Like homosexuality, it legitimizes sodomy."

Israel's attorney general had ruled two days before the earthquake that same-sex couples in the country should be allowed to adopt children. According to Benizri, putting an end to "passing legislation on how to encourage homosexual activity in the state of Israel" would represent a cost-effective method of preventing future earthquakes.

"God says you shake your genitals where you are not supposed to and I will shake my world in order to wake you up," he added. A unique view, to be sure.

Mike Hammel, chairman of the Israeli GLBT Association commented on the remarks saying, "I suppose we should be flattered he attributes us with such magical powers." ▽

TOP 10 RINGTONES

- 1) Low Flo Rida
- 2) For the Nights I Can't Remember Hedley
- 3) Love In This Club feat. Young Jeezy Usher
- 4) Feedback Janet
- 5) Apologize feat OneRepublic Timbaland
- 6) Hallelujah Jeff Buckley
- 7) Elevator feat. Timbaland Flo Rida
- 8) Sorry Buckcherry
- 9) Thunderstruck AC/DC
- 10) With You Chris Brown

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ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

He "cleans up well" is prison lingo. It refers to a convict who, upon leaving jail, is able to overhaul his appearance and demeanour so thoroughly that no one can tell he has served time. I believe that in the coming weeks you will have access to another version of this skill. You will so completely erase the traces of your own personal version of "incarceration" that everyone will assume that you've always been a free bird.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

In an effort to create safer streets, some European towns are getting rid of traffic signs and stoplights. The theory is that if drivers have no visible aides to guide them, they will slow down and be more considerate. "What we want is for people to be confused," says an official of the German town of Bohmte. "When they're confused, they'll be more alert and drive more carefully." In this spirit, and in accordance with your astrological omens, I suggest that you spend a week exploring the virtues of living without any rules. Instead, rely on your intuition about what's most righteous and authentic to do in every situation. Proceed on a case-by-case basis, without invoking general principles or overarching theories.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

Before you attempt a quantum leap of faith over the yawning abyss, please remove your 500 pounds of defence mechanisms first. Your success in soar-

ing the whole distance will require you to be free of emotional baggage. As long as you fulfill this simple prerequisite, I'm in favour of you risking the transition. It's about time you summoned more zeal to follow the path with heart, even if that path resumes on the other side of the great divide.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

There's a place in Venezuela where lightning storms rage 10 hours a night, 150 days of the year. It's where the Catatumbo River flows into Lake Maracaibo. Humans put their lives at risk to be near this persistent storm. The upside of the phenomenon is that it generates a significant portion of our planet's ozone, and produces so much light that it helps ships navigate up to 400 kilometres away. If you encounter anything with a metaphorical resemblance to the Catatumbo lightning in the coming days, I suggest you enjoy it from a distance. That way, it'll provide you with all of its benefits and none of its dangers.

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

A psychotherapist friend told me that most of his clients' problems fit into one of three categories: ordinary but interesting, bizarre and interesting, bizarre but dull. What's your style, Leo? Even if you're normally the "ordinary but interesting" type, I suspect that you've entered, at least temporarily, the ranks of the "bizarre but interesting" crowd. There's a big potential perk to this development. It may supply you with a steady flow of colourful melodrama, allowing you to win friends and influence people as you regale them with tales of your strangely entertaining life.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

Having friendly arguments will be an excellent strategy for generating clarity in the coming days. Since everyone has a piece of the truth but no one has more than a piece of the truth, the whole story will have to be assembled from a variety of fragments. I foresee you and your cohorts banging your partial truths together, fighting and collaborating in an untidy quest to transcend each of your own narrow perspectives. Your mantra is William Blake's assertion that "without contraries there is no progression."

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

George W Bush is the most unpopular US president in history. His 19 per cent approval rating in February was even worse than that of the king of disgrace, Richard Nixon. A growing consensus among historians also suggests that Bush is the worst president ever. The debacle of the Iraq invasion is the chief factor in that appraisal, but there's so much more. To name a few: the plunging value of the dollar, the stupendous national debt, the rapid degeneration of the environment, the catastrophic loss of civil liberties and the abuse of human rights. And yet Bush has done one wonderful deed that has been unsung: he has poured billions of dollars of aid into Africa, more than any previous president. In accordance with your current astrological omens, Libra, I challenge you to do what I just did: look for redemption in an influence that has created a mess or broken your heart.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

A heterosexual man who is seeking a partner often doesn't want a woman to be complete unto herself; he hopes she'll feel inadequate and lost without him. Similarly,

many hetero women demand that their men be absolutely dependent on them. Those of the gay persuasion aren't necessarily any different; quite a few also prefer their consorts to be unable to thrive alone. But there are also plenty of people who want their intimate relationships to be an alliance of strong, equal, independent partners. Where do you stand on this issue, Scorpio? It's an ideal time for you to cultivate a longing for a bond in which you are complete unto yourself and your partner is complete unto himself or herself.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

Hello, I am Vimaia Blavatsky, the Winter Witch. Rob Breznsy asked me to make a guest appearance in your horoscope. Since spring is imminent, I'll soon be retiring from my public work and will begin the research, meditations and prayers that will prepare for the new round of therapeutic magic I'll offer next winter. But I'm still available for a while longer to help you finish any work you've been doing in the following areas: building solid psychological foundations, taking total responsibility for your fate, pruning away extraneous wishes and dead-end dreams, and getting down to the core of every issue. How have you been progressing on those tasks? If you need a boost, send out a telepathic request for me to appear in your dreams. I'll be there.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

The editors of the *Our Dumb Century* claim there are 40 000 jokes crammed into the book's 256 pages. It took 12 people two years to come up with this humour onslaught, they say, or 4.5 jokes per person per day. I advise you to triple that output in the coming week, Capricorn. Even if you

don't normally think of yourself as a comedian, the astrological omens suggest that you will be funnier than you've ever been. That's fortunate, because in order to get the most out of the upcoming opportunities, you should unleash a flood of wit and hilarity.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

"The composer Stravinsky had written a new piece with a difficult violin passage," writes Thomas Powers, quoted in the book *Sunbeams*. "After it had been in rehearsal for several weeks, the solo violinist came to Stravinsky and said he was sorry, he had tried his best, the passage was too difficult, no violinist could play it. Stravinsky said, 'I understand that. What I am after is the sound of someone trying to play it.'" Keep this story close to your heart in the coming week, Aquarius. It will give you the proper perspective as you, too, go about the work of doing the best you can at a task that is virtually impossible to perfect.

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

A century before the New Age movement began, French playwright Victor Hugo (1802 - 1885) was conversing with the dead. I want to tell you what the spirit of Galileo told him at a séance, because it's the perfect message for you to hear right now: "You know what I would do if I were in your place? I'd drink from the milk basin of the Milky Way. I'd swallow comets; I'd lunch on dawn; I'd dine on day and I'd sup on night; I'd invite myself, splendid table-companion that I am, to the banquet of all the glories, and I'd salute God as my host! I'd work up a magnificent hunger, an enormous thirst, and I'd race through the drunken spaces between the spheres singing the fearsome drinking song of eternity." ▽

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Need a Fringe Spot?

Local actor has one and would like to collaborate, any genre, e-mail destisjour@hotmail.com

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Edmonton Fashion Week is looking for male and female models. Go See on Mar. 15 and Mar. 29, 5-7pm at Planet Ze, 10055-30 Ave. Info at www.edmontonfashionweek.com

Edmonton Fashion Week is looking for dancers, musi-

cians and performers. Auditions on Mar. 15 and Mar. 29, 5-7pm at planet ze design. Info at www.edmontonfashionweek.com

Edmonton Fashion Week is looking for models. Final Go See on Sun, Mar. 30, 1-5pm at planet ze. Audition for musicians, dancers and performers on Mar. 30, 1-5. For info check out www.edmontonfashionweek.com

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Strathcona County Weavers meet every Wed, 9:30-11am at Smeltzer House. Ph Delores Zadko, 467-7213 for more info.

Artists and photographers wanted to discuss the displaying of work for possible co-op. E-mail: naturelving1@hotmail.com

Profiles seeks proposals from artists for exhibition during 2009. Deadline: Sat, Mar. 22, 4pm. Info T. Heidi at 460-4310 or E: ahtfield@shaw.ca

ACTORS NEEDED FOR INDEPENDENT FILM Mar. 17. NonUnion TV Crime Pilot to be shot Mar. 17-31. Actors all ages needed. Multi day & single day. Call

780-633-9271 for info

Looking for graphic designer to help with website for music festival. hotcmf.com Honorarium available. 758-9856

MUSICIANS

Alberta Music Information Session: find out what you need to know about performing during the three-day festival, how to submit your release for award consideration. Wed, Mar. 19, 6:30pm (door), 7pm (session) at the Druid, 11606 Jasper Ave. FREE for Alberta Music members, \$5 for non-members

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The STAR Project for youth 15-30 who are not Eligible for EI and who are willing to work towards employment. Project runs Mar. 31-Aug. 15, includes life skills training, employment readiness, job shadowing and employer paid work experience placements. Receive a living allowance and up to \$500 in bonuses throughout the Project. Applications available at the Youth Emergency Shelter Society, call 969-7186 EXT 227 for info. Application deadline: Mar. 21, funded in part by the Government of Canada

Single player needed for original coveys trio. Please be serious and professional. Positive, creative energy required. Ph 860-8277

Wanted jammers; rock, country and old time for monthly jam. Ph Randy 973 5593 or randyglen@jumpupdj.com

Established punk metal band ALL ELSE FAILS seeking new bass player. Must have killer vox (singing + screaming), gear, and able to tour extensively. Call Barrett @ 221-7413 or Brent @ 902-4551

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old. www.youthvolunteer.ca

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Help, help! My Supergirl vagina is bruising his manhood!

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DEAR ANDREA:

I'm having the best sex of my life, but when I'm having a good time—which is often—my PC muscles have minds of their own and they get enthusiastic. I know I've got strong PC muscles because the last time I went to Doc Stirrup she told me to squeeze and then said "whoa." The end result is that I inflicted one doozy of an all-round bruise on my poor guy's junk.

He's being a sport about it and says he doesn't mind, but I know it hurts him afterwards and I'd rather not vagina-dentata my guy. Any advice?

LOVE, SUPERGIRL

DEAR GIRL:

I think we'd all rather you not cause per-

manent damage, physical or psychic, to your sweet baboo's manhood (also either physical or psychic, come to think of it) and I do think I can help, although I understand that you are a woman to be reckoned with and he probably shouldn't take anything for granted. (Note: I know the writer slightly, and nobody would mistake her for anything less than a force of nature, although obviously I had no idea just how forceful. Bruising! Really.)

Now here's the thing, the whole deal with yer basic dentata muscles is that they are under conscious control, so even though you'd rather get all transported and let your eyes roll back in your head and all that, you'll have to think, really think, about relaxing them while you're at it, exactly the way those with less well-toned bits have to think about contracting them. In fact, perhaps it's best to look at this entire problem backwards, if you will.

While your (boyfriend's) problem is not unheard-of—one can, for instance, rapidly

lose all feeling in one's hand after inserting it to the wrist into the terrifyingly well-toned feminine interior of a Kegel-exercise enthusiast—the opposite complaint is far more common. When a woman can't feel much upon intromission, or her male partner finds himself diligently thrusting away but has to keep reminding himself that he isn't just pumping blindly into thin air, then it's time for some Kegeling and some applied mindfulness. I suggest that you practice *not* contracting your pelvic muscles when excited, either with his help (warning: not particularly erotic) or alone, or some of each. Women who are trying to get their muscles under conscious control may buy something like a "Kegelsizer" or "vaginal bar-bell," even. These are rather lovely, smooth, heavy devices of stainless steel or similar, and one practices holding onto the larger, more bulbous end and then moves up to the smaller, at which point one may also be able to project ping-pong balls across the bar-room or smoke a cigarette in

an unexpected manner, but of course you're not interested in such circus tricks ... you're not, right?

I am quite sure that you could employ such exercises in the pursuit of less rather than more, since after all it's less reflexive clenching you're after, not less muscle. Just do be careful not to accidentally ultra-tone yourself there. You could break something.

There are also, of course, tips and tricks for genital-size-discordant couples that could be brought into play here, backwards. Women who want *more* friction for themselves and/or their partners keep their legs close together, so don't. The famous-but-not-for-amateurs modified missionary position where the woman lies supine and the man straddles her legs, keeping them clamped between his manly thighs should they dare to make a break for it, is one obvious no-no. The one with your feet up around his ears while he clutches your hips? Don't do that. Also, all those tips for better alignment, hip-tilt pillows and whatnot, are

meant for G-spot (internal clitoral) stimulation but that is accomplished at least partly by just making things tighter in there, so they count too. I'd also throw in whatever you yourselves do in pursuit of greater sensation, since in intercourse, sensation pretty much equals tightness, which equals friction, and quit (briefly, we hope) whatever you were doing when you caused the bruising. Remember, we're in Bizarro World here, so whatever feels especially intense is on the "quit it" list, at least until you get those Supergirl muscles of yours under control. And in the interest of equal time for opposing cartoons, stop eating spinach.

Now, lube. Lube is tricky, since it actually decreases friction yet improves sexual sensation, making a lie of what I said above about friction; but never mind that. Yes, I tell people who aren't feeling enough to try more lube, and yes, I tell people who are feeling *too much* to try more lube. What the heck, it's cheap.

LOVE, ANDREA

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old.
www.youthvolunteer.ca

Community Options Society/Board Recruiting 2008-2009: Community Options, a Society for Children & Families, is a non-profit Society, which has provided services to children and their families in Edmonton/area since 1976. Contact: Deb Huber, Board Member, E: dhuber@shaw.ca / T: 537-5156

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Love Bingo? Volunteer for Elder Care. Bingo volunteers are needed to help raise funds for program meals and outings. Ph 434-4747, ext. 4

Exposure: Edmonton's Winter Arts and Culture Festival seeks steering committee volunteers. Visit www.exposurefestival.ca

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Special needs "Learn to Bike" courses at Gold Bar Park are looking for volunteer experienced cyclists to help with this course. Thu evenings May 1-June 12, Sept. 4-Oct. 16. John at jbcollier@shaw.ca

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Do You Suffer From Post Partum Depression? BRAIN NEUROLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM, Dept. of Psychiatry, U of A are seeking women with post partum depression to participate in a study. Free child care and reimbursement will be provided. Contact 407-3221

HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS required for research studies with the Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A. Call 407-3906 or 407-3221. Reimbursement will be provided.

People suffering from MAJOR DEPRESSION needed for research study. Contact the Neurobiology Research Program at U of A Hospital by calling 407-3906. Reimbursement for participation will be provided.

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society are looking for volunteer tutors to work with adult students in the ESL - English as a Second Language program. Training and materials provided. Contact 424-5514.

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A seeks individuals who have recently delivered and are suffering from POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION for research

study (Call 407-3221). Reimbursement provided.

Do you love art and people? Then the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts can use you! Come volunteer and show off your talents and passion. www.ninahaggertyart.ca or 474-7611

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Volunteers are urgently needed to shovel snow for seniors. To register or for more information, call Heather at Westend Seniors Activity Centre, 483-1209

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CJSR NEWS: News is the telling of our community's stories. If you have stories that the world must hear, start volunteering with CJSR's news department. Gain experience in radio, contribute to a diverse community, and learn new skills. Email news@cjsr.com

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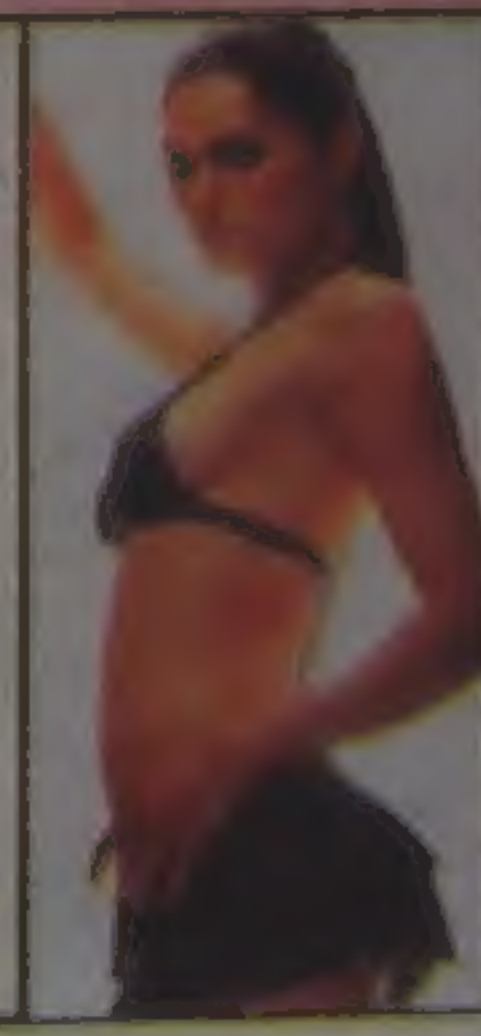
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